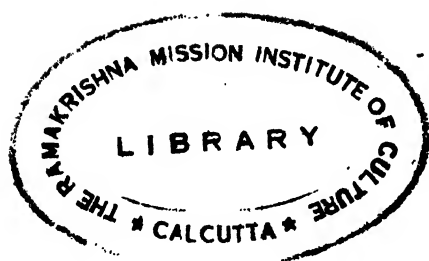
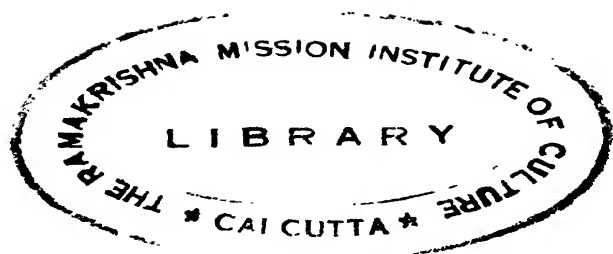


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Sivanath Sastri

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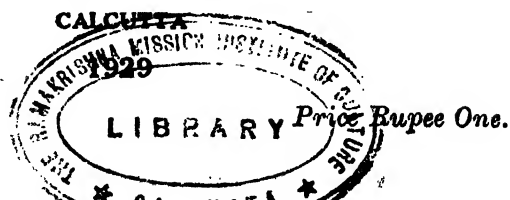
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SIVANATH SASTRI.

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CHAPTER I.

EARLY LIFE.

The short history of the Brahmo Samaj abounds in events of a providential character. The life and career of its founder cannot be accounted for by the environment and contemporary circumstances. The rise of Rammohan Roy in the darkest days of Indian history was beyond doubt a dispensation of the wisdom of God. The change of heart of Devendranath Tagore, a scion of a wealthy and influential family, brought up in the midst of luxuries, and his joining the Brahmo Samaj have something of the miraculous in them. The accession of Kesav Chandra Sen, a descendant of another rich and ancient family, to the cause of the Brahmo Samaj, has the appearance of the unusual. Similarly Sivanath Sastri's joining the ranks of the Brahmo Samaj has a distinctly providential character. Born in an orthodox family of Vedic Brahmins which from time immemorial had been engaged in spiritual ministration according to the precepts of the old religion, his conversion to the new and reformed faith was quite unexpected. Sivanath Sastri was born at the house of his maternal grandfather at Changaripota in the district of 24-Perganas on the

31st of January, 1847. His father, Pandit Harananda Bhattacharya, belonged to the village of Mazilpore in the same district. The family is believed to have migrated from Southern India some centuries ago, halting in Orissa for some generations. Sivanath both from his father's and mother's side was descended from a line of ancestors who were typical Brahmins, examples of plain living and high thinking. They were content to live in comparative poverty, devoting themselves to study and religious ministrations. Sivanath's father was the first in his family to undertake secular work, on account of which he incurred much obloquy. His great grandfather Ramjay Nyayalankar was a Sanskrit scholar of considerable reputation. Ramjay Nyayalankar was a devotee of Kali and was a very pious man. His daily devotions left a deep impression on the early life of Sivanath. He died at the age of 103, when Sivanath was about 12 years of age. Sivanath was his pet in his boyhood. Sivanath's grandfather died at an early age, and the family was maintained by the income of his great grandfather which consisted of donations from rich disciples. Ramjay Nyayalankar was the family priest of the well-known Mallick family of Pataldanga in Calcutta. He had to live in Calcutta during the greater part of the year in connection with the priestly duties of the family. Sivanath's maternal grandfather Harachandra Nyayaratna, was also a well-known Sanskrit scholar. He had a *Tol* for teaching students at Kasuaripara in Calcutta. Harachandra was a wise man of the world, and by dint of economy and good management saved a small amount out of his modest income with which he built a two-storied brick-house in his native village. Sivanath's father Harananda Bhattacharya was a short, thin, hot-tempered man who had a high sense of honour and self-respect. He was a typical Brahmin, simple, stern, proud, noble-minded, scrupulously honest and absolutely fearless. Sivanath's mother was a woman of common sense and great piety and was an expert in household duties.



Mother of Sivanath Sastri.

Sivanath inherited in a large measure the noble qualities of both the parental families. He was a favourite of his maternal grandfather as well as his paternal great grandfather, who at the time of Sivanath's birth was very old and blind. But Sivanath was not well cared for in his infancy. His father at the time of his birth was studying in the Sanskrit College at Calcutta, and he never showed any tenderness for the son. His grandfather had died long ago and his great grandfather, though very fond of him, could not give any personal attention to the infant. The management of the house was in the hands of Sivanath's aunt (father's sister) and her husband, who were rather jealous of the affection shown to the new-born child by the old Ramjoy Nyayalankar. There was no good feeling between Sivanath's mother and aunt. The consequence was that Sivanath was very much neglected, his mother being busily engaged in household work. On account of want of proper care and nutritious diet, Sivanath became seriously ill while a child of a few months. Though he recovered from it, the effect of his early illness continued all through his life. His constitution was permanently undermined by early neglect and want of proper care. He was sent to the village school at the usual age, from which he was transferred shortly afterwards to the model vernacular school which had been established at Mazilpore during the administration of Lord Hardinge. After a few years of schooling in his native village, Sivanath was brought to Calcutta by his father who was then employed as a Pandit in Calcutta on a salary of Rs. 25. His maternal grandfather Harachandra Nyayaratna had an establishment in Calcutta and his maternal uncle, Pandit Dwarakanath Vidyabhushan, the well-known editor of the Somaprakasha, a vernacular weekly, held in high esteem, was then a Professor in Sanskrit College.

Sivanath on his arrival at Calcutta became an inmate of the household of his maternal grandfather and uncle in Siddheswar Chandra's Lane, Champatala. It was a painful

wrench in every respect. The change from the village life with its open-air, waving corn-fields, luxuriant vegetation, singing birds, to a dingy and unhealthy house in a Calcutta lane was very distasteful to the impressionable nature of the boy. Still more painful was the separation from the home of his childhood. Sivanath was by nature intensely affectionate. From his childhood his heart hungered for love and affection. He was tenderly attached to his mother and sisters ; he was particularly fond of a sister named *Unmadini* who was about four years younger than himself. The separation from them was intensely painful. In Calcutta the young boy had to live among rough and rude men who were much older than himself, entirely cut off from the affection of women. The atmosphere of the house in which he had to live was very unhealthy. A number of hangers-on, distant relatives of his maternal grandfather, who had a very low ideal of life used to live in the house. During the absence of the master of the house they used to indulge in filthy talk and objectionable practices in the presence of the young Sivanath. It is really remarkable that in the midst of such surroundings Sivanath was able to retain the purity of his mind and character.

Sivanath's father was anxious to give him English education. He had found to his cost that Sanskrit learning was not at all paying. Though educated in Sanskrit College, he could not earn more than Rs. 25 a month. He therefore wished to avoid that mistake in the case of his son. He had thought of getting Sivanath admitted to the school of David Hare. But it was expensive. Moreover his friend Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, who was then Principal of Sanskrit College, where Sivanath's uncle was a Professor, desired to have Sivanath in his own College. An English department had already been opened in Sanskrit College and Pandit Harananda Bhattacharya got Sivanath admitted to it rather reluctantly.

Sivanath had to prosecute his studies under many

difficulties. The lodgings were unhealthy and uncongenial. The food was inadequate and was not served at the proper time. Soon after his arrival in Calcutta he became seriously ill. After some time he was removed to another house in Jaliapara Lane where he lived with his father. Here also the inmates were men of rough and rude manners. The meals were late and were not regularly served. Very often young Sivanath fell asleep before the meal was ready at night, and his father would awaken him with thrashing. When shortly afterwards his father was transferred to Mazilpore as the Head Pandit of the local Hardingo Model school, Sivanath was again sent to his uncle's house in Sidheswar Chandra's Lane, where he was thrown into the company of bad people, some of whom were drunkards. One of them taught him to smoke. Sivanath had a few happy days here when his uncle brought his mother and wife to live with him in Calcutta. But when the Calcutta-Matla Line was opened his uncle broke up the Calcutta household and began to come to Calcutta from his native village as a daily passenger. Sivanath became shelterless and had to live for some time temporarily in different places till at last his father came to Calcutta and persuaded a distant relative to keep Sivanath with him. He was a poor compositor living in a hut thatched with sal leaves. The arrangement was that Sivanath would cook in the morning for both, and his guardian in the evening. But practically he had to do the entire cooking both in the morning and evening as also to clean the utensils and perform other household duties. Necessarily his studies suffered very much. After some time, his father got him admitted to the household of Babu Maheshchandra Choudhury at Bhawanipore. He was the Zemindar of Ahmadpore in the district of Burdwan and practised as a pleader in the Calcutta High Court. He was a very generous and kind-hearted man. Sivanath's father had for some time been a Pandit in the Ahmadpore school and thus had become acquainted with

Babu Maheshchandra Chaudhury. On the strength of this acquaintance he requested Babu Maheshchandra Chaudhury to keep Sivanath in his house, to which he readily agreed. Here Sivanath lived happily and was treated with kindness and consideration, but the distance between Bhawanipore and Sanskrit College was long, and much of his time was wasted in walking to and from college.

However, Sivanath continued to prosecute his studies in Sanskrit college under such difficulties. He was a general favourite with the students and teachers of the college both on account of his intelligence and his character. He was known as an honest and fearless boy. Once there was a quarrel between the students of two classes of Sanskrit College leading to a free fight. Professor E. B. Cowel was at the head of the institution. When the matter was reported to him he came to the class to which Sivanath belonged and asked all those boys, who were implicated in the fight, to stand up. When no one stood up Professor Cowel said, 'Am I to understand that none of you took part in the quarrel?' Then Sivanath stood up in his place. Professor Cowel was impressed with the truthfulness of the boy and took him to his room. He said that he was pleased with his courage and honesty, but it was wrong on his part to take part in the fight. Another incident of his student life may be mentioned here. While he was staying at the house of Babu Maheshchandra Choudhury, his father sent him an official paper with the instruction that it should be delivered to Mr Woodrow, then Inspector of schools. On the way to his college, Sivanath called at the office of Mr Woodrow, who was then having his lunch in the adjoining room. On his entrance to his office room, as Sivanath was going to hand over the paper to Mr. Woodrow, the latter noticed that Sivanath had slippers on, and asked him why he had entered the room without taking them off. Sivanath replied that he did not know that that was the rule. Mr. Woodrow asked him to leave his shoes outside. Sivanath refused to

do so as Mr. Woodrow and his clerks had shoes on. A long discussion ensued and Mr. Woodrow could not succeed in making the boy obey his orders. The matter came to the notice of his uncle Pandit Dwarakanath Vidyabhushan, who was then the editor of *Somaprakash* and was reported in its columns, thus creating some sensation.

In spite of such difficulties and privations Sivanath passed the Entrance Examination of the Calcutta University in the year 1866, with credit, obtaining a Government scholarship of Rs. 15 a month. He was then in his nineteenth year. He had already been in touch with the Brahmo Samaj. He had heard of the Brahmo Samaj from his boyhood, as a few young men of Masilpore, who were older than himself, such as Babu Umeshchandra Datta and Babu Kalinath Datta, were earnest Brahmos. But it was while staying at the house of Babu Maheshchandra Chaudhury at Bhawanipore that he began to attend the meetings of the Bhawanipore Brahmo Samaj. Maharshi Devendranath Tagore used to conduct divine service at the Bhawanipore Samaj now and then about this time. Young Sivanath often attended these meetings. But he was not then acquainted with many Brahmos. His spiritual awakening, however, had its origin in intense penitence under very sad circumstances. Sivanath's first marriage took place when he was a boy of twelve only. The match was settled much earlier according to the caste customs, when Sivanath was only two years old and the bride a baby of ten months. Even at the time of the marriage Sivanath could not have understood the significance of the ceremony which was arranged by his father. Owing to some differences of opinion Sivanath's father was displeased with his daughter-in-law and her family, and resolved to get his son married again. Sivanath was then eighteen years of age. He mildly expressed his unwillingness to his father, who was a terrible man of whom Sivanath was mortally afraid. When the subject was first mentioned to Sivanath, he pointed out to his father the future consequences. But the latter grew wild and threatened to beat him

with shoes in hand. Sivanath was a very obedient son and turned in despair to his mother; but she too did not dare to intervene in the matter. Much against the wishes of Sivanath the marriage was performed. But soon afterwards he fully realised the seriousness of the event and was filled with profound remorse for submission to the unreasonable demand of his father. Even at the time of the ceremony he was weeping. This event had a profound and permanent effect on his future life internal and external. It was the greatest misfortune of his life. But here was the genesis of his spiritual life, so noble and so profound. In the agony of repentance he found solace in prayer and worship. His friend Babu Umeshchandra Datta, who was a few years older than he and had already joined the Brahmo Samaj, having been apprised of the state of his mind, presented him with a copy of Theodore Parker's 'Ten Sermons and Prayers'. He found solace in this book. It was at this stage that the resolve came to his mind that henceforth he should do whatever he felt to be right and from this time onwards he began to attend the service of the Brahmo Samaj.

The new determination was put to severe test in a short time. When Sivanath's father heard that he had been going to the Brahmo Samaj, he came to Calcutta and told him not to do so. But this time Sivanath was firm. He said that he would gladly obey him; but he begged his father to be so kind as not to interfere in the affairs of his spiritual life. Harananda Bhattacharya was astonished at this reply. It was not long before there were further developments. Sivanath used to spend long holidays in his home at Mazilpore, when he had to conduct the daily worship of the family god. About this time Sivanath felt that it was not right for him to conduct the worship of the family idol; and on his next visit to his home, when his father, as usual, asked him to perform the priestly office, Sivanath quietly replied that he could not do it—a decision at which he had arrived after considerable struggle and hesitation. On hearing the reason of this, his

father became mad with rage and brought a stick to beat him. Sivanath firmly told him that he might beat him to death, but could not make him worship the idol against his conscience. His father was speechless at this reply.

Sivanath had been associated with the widow remarriage movement, even from an early period. Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, the pioneer of the movement, was a personal friend of his father and uncle. He used to come to his uncle's house at Calcutta frequently and used to pet the boy Sivanath during these visits. Sivanath had opportunities of hearing long discussions in favour of widow remarriage in his uncle's house. In fact he grew up in the atmosphere of the new reform movement. His kind and chivalrous heart melted at the sorrow and suffering of the widows. He became a warm supporter of the new movement. He was present at the first widow marriage promoted by Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar. In 1868 he took a leading part in the marriage of his friend, Yogendranath Banerjee, later on Vidyabhushan with a widowed girl named Mahalakshmi. She was a sister of his friend, Isan Chandra Roy, who desired her to get remarried. About this time, Yogendranath lost his first wife and thought of marrying again. At the suggestion of Sivanath he agreed to marry a widowed girl. Sivanath arranged the match between Yogendranath and Mahalakshmi. The marriage was duly solemnised in 1868 under the supervision of Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, who bore all the expenses. Sivanath had to work very hard to bring about the marriage. But his labours did not end here. The newly married couple were at once excommunicated and deserted by their close friends, and were otherwise put to immense difficulties. They could not get servants, nor had they the means to engage servants. Sivanath felt himself considerably responsible for their troubles and came to live with them and share their difficulties and privations. Since 1867, he was living in the happy home of Babu Jagatchandra Banerjee at Sakkaritola as one of the family. He became acquainted with

this family while living at the house of Babu Maheschandra Chaudhuri at Bhawanipore, through Mahim, the son of Babu Jagatchandra Banerjee, who was a student of Sanskrit College. The acquaintance deepened into intimate friendship. Mahim used to call Sivanath 'Dada' (elder brother) and Sivanath called Mahim's mother Masima (aunt). The kind lady became so attached to Sivanath that she would be unhappy if Sivanath would not come to their house for a few days. She had a niece, a widow girl of tender age, who likewise became deeply attached to Sivanath. When the family moved from Sankaritola to Bhawanipore, they insisted on Sivanath's accompanying and living with them at their new residence. Sivanath had to comply with the unanimous request of the family. Here he was not only comfortable, but found a real home surrounded by loving people. But after the marriage of Yogendra and Mahalaksmi he felt constrained to tear himself off from the comfort and love of this happy home to share the privations and persecutions of this newly married couple. Sivanath rendered them financial help out of his scholarship, taught Mahalakshmi, assisted her in her household work, drew water and did marketing for the household; in fact he was their friend, their guardian, and their servant. Not long afterwards he was instrumental in bringing about another widow remarriage, the bridegroom this time being his friend Upendranath Das, a son of Sreenath Das, a rich Vakil of the Calcutta High Court.

The distractions of the widow remarriage agitation and the struggles consequent on his association with the Brahmo Samaj interfered considerably with his studies. He was now in the second year class. Only a few months remained before the F.A. Examination, but he was not at all prepared. One day Prasannakumar Sarvadhikari, who was then Principal of Sanskrit College, called him to his room and said to him, 'You are engaged in good work, no doubt, and I do not want to say anything against it. But I

entertained much hope for you as well as for the College. But as things look now, far from gaining any distinction, there is hardly any chance of your passing the Examination.' In a moment Sivanath realised the situation. Sivanath knew that not only his future depended on the result of the Examination, but the welfare of those for whom he was labouring so hard, was involved in it. If he did not get the scholarship Jogendra and Mahalakshmi would be stranded for want of financial help. After a little consideration he requested Principal Sarvadhikari if he could do him a favour. On being asked what it was, he replied that if he would be excused attendance at the lectures in the class for the remainder of the term he would make one final effort and concentrate his time and attention on uninterrupted study. His request was granted ; Sivanath then went to his former benefactor, Babu Maheschandra Chaudhury of Bhawanipore, got a secluded room in his house, shut himself up in it and began to prepare for his examination by applying himself whole-heartedly to his studies. Sivanath had a marvellous capacity for strenuous work and concentration of energy. During this period he would come out of his room only twice to take his food. He did not go to bed at night. When absolutely exhausted he would for a while lie down on a mat, a few books under his head serving him as a pillow. When the results of the Examination were out it was found that Sivanath had achieved brilliant distinction, getting scholarships to the extent of Rs 59, Rs 32 as a first-grade general scholarship, Rs 15 as Duff scholarship for being first in languages, and Rs 12 for being the first among the successful students of Sanskrit College. Here was unquestionable evidence of his intellectual capacity. Had he attended to his studies properly he might have achieved greater distinction in his student career. But it was the misfortune of Sivanath's career that he could not give his undivided attention to anything at a time. As one of his intimate friends once remarked, he had always too many irons in the fire.

CHAPTER II

DAWN OF SPIRITUAL LIFE.

The dawning spiritual life of Sivanath, nurtured by association with the Brahmo Samaj, led to earnest self-discipline and self-mortification. Sivnath was by nature jolly and lively, fond of fun and merriment ; but henceforth he avoided all amusements and led a life of austere self-denial. With his poetical temperament, he was fond of reading poetry and general literature and was averse to the study of mathematics. But when the new life dawned in him, he voluntarily avoided poetry and submitted to a course of mathematical studies. In his boyhood he was very fond of meat, so much so that on the day when meat was to be cooked, he would be busily engaged with the dressing and cooking of meat and forget all other work untill he had partaken of his favourite dish. But after the conversion of his heart he resolutely gave up meat-eating, not on religious ground, nor for avoiding cruelty involved in killing animals, but for the avowed purpose of disciplining his mind. The new spirit involved him in matters of serious consequences. His penitence for marrying a second time in obedience to the command of his father, did not stop with mere sentimental repentance. He felt that he ought to make adequate reparation to the innocent girl involved in the matter. He deeply pondered over the question and decided to take back his first wife Prasannamayī Devi, who had been discarded by his father. He communicated his resolve to his maternal grandmother, who brought his wife to her own house, where Sivnath would meet her on Saturdays. When Sivanath's father heard of this he became furious. But now Sivanath was a changed man and remained firm in his resolution. His father, somewhat relented, and he consented to take the lady to his own house. Now Sivanath anxiously considered what amends

he could make to his second wife Birajmohini. Simple and inexperienced as she was, he thought he would get her married to some one else. In this project, he was backed by Mahalakshmi, the still more simple widowed girl who was married to Jogendranath Vidyabhushan, at the instance of Sivanath. With this project in view, Sivanath at once went to the house of Birajmohini's father to bring her to Calcutta. But the father naturally did not consent to send her with him.

Early in 1869, Mahalakshmi suddenly died of cholera. The incident cast a deep gloom over the mind of Sivanath and took away all sweetness and savour from the joy of his signal ~~success~~ at the F. A. Examination, the results of which were just out. It was for the comfort of Mahalakshmi that he desired to secure a scholarship and worked so hard. Now he felt that all his labours were useless. But Providence had other plans. He had now to bring his wife to Calcutta. In July, 1868, his first child, Hemlata, was born at his father's house. Sivanath had apprehensions that his father would settle a match for the baby according to the caste custom. So he expressly wrote to his father not to do so. But the autocratic father was perversely obstinate and settled a match. This deeply grieved Sivanath and renewed the friction between father and son. Sivanath felt that he must bring his wife to Calcutta and give her training according to his ideals.

It was not long afterwards that there came the final breach between father and son, owing to Sivanath's public initiation into Brahmoism and formally joining the Brahmo Samaj. Though he had been associated with the Brahmo Samaj since 1865, he had not yet joined formally and was not intimately connected with it. He was not yet known to the Brahmo leaders and was not acquainted with many Brahmos besides a few personal friends. He used to attend the meetings of the Samaj quietly and slip away before anybody could talk to him. Up to 1868, he had no

sympathy with the progressive section of the Brahmo Samaj headed by Kesav Chandra Sen. He felt drawn more towards Devendranath Tagore, possibly because one of his distant cousins, Pandit Hemchandra Vidyaratna was the editor of *Tatwabodhini Patrika* and one of the ministers of the Adi-Brahmo Samaj. The latter used to speak to him very highly of Devendranath Tagore. On the occasion of the Maghotsava of 1868 the progressive party first instituted *Nagar-Sankirtan* in Calcutta. Sivanath, born as he was in a Sakta family, was not in sympathy with the Sankirtan ; but, on the anniversary day, when he was coming out of the Adi Brahmo Samaj after service, somebody told him that Kesav and his party were carrying the day with their *Sankirtan*. He had a copy of the *Sankirtan* in his hand which he gave to Sivanath. It was the famous *Nagar-Sankirtan*, which contains the declaration that men and women have equal rights, whoever has *Bhakti* shall obtain *Mukti* ; there is no discrimination of caste. Sivanath felt at once that it was a call for him. He went straight to the house of Gopal Chandra Mallick at Sinduriapati, where the progressive party were to have their *Utsav*. Kesav and his followers had not yet come to the place. So Sivanath went to the house of Kesav at Calootola. The party were just preparing to start. Bijayakrishna Goswami, one of the leading members of the progressive party, who had been a follow-student of Sivanath in the Sanskrit College, heartily welcomed him with an embrace. He went with them to the appointed place for the *Utsav* and stayed there standing in one corner till 10 o'clock at night. From that day he was fastened to the progressive party of Kesav Chandra Sen.

He now rapidly drew closer to the Brahmo Samaj and became one of the inner circle of the progressive party. Towards the end of 1868 there arose a controversy and a consequent alienation of feelings among the followers of Kesav Chandra Sen. There was an allegation that some of them called him saviour and worshipped him. This rumour originated at Monghyer, where Kesavchandra Sen with some of his

followers had gone for a change. This led to a considerable agitation in the Brahmo Samaj. Pandit Bijaykrishna Goswami and Babu Jadunath Chakravarti, two of the most earnest fellow-workers of Kesav, left his party. Pandit Bijaykrishna Goswami, who had already consecrated himself to the mission work of the Brahmo Samaj, retired to his home at Santipore, where he continued to work for the Brahmo Samaj, maintaining himself by medical practice. Sivanath was sorely grieved at this misunderstanding. He did not believe in the allegation of man-worship. He realised that the incident arose out of the natural excess of veneration showed to Kesav Chandra Sen by some of his followers. He even paid a visit to Pandit Bijaykrishna Goswami at Santipore, who was his personal friend to ascertain the facts from him. The agitation, however subsided by the beginning of 1869, when Bijaykrishna Goswami, having seen his mistake, made a public apology to Kesav Chandra Sen. Sivanath was greatly pleased at this turn of events. An *Utsav* was held at Kolaighata near Rana-ghat on the occasion of this reunion of friends. Sivanath attended this *Utsav* along with other Brahmos. It was on this occasion that he became first known to Kesav Chandra sen. When a discussion was going on about the dispute between the great leader and his opponents, Sivanath said that he did not know who wrote in the *Indian Mirror* and *Dharmatatwa*, but the manner in which Bijaykrishna Goswami and Jadunath Chakravarti were attacked in the columns of those papers was highly objectionable. Kesav Chandra Sen whispered to the person sitting by him, inquiring who was the young man. He was told that he was the nephew of the editor of *Samaprakash*. From this time Kesav took personal notice of him, and it was not long before Sivanath became closely acquainted with him.

In August, 1869, the new Mandir of the progressive party, which assumed the name of the Brahmo Samaj of India, was opened, and a band of young men, numbering twenty-one, were initiated into Brahmoism. Sivanath was one of the party,

which included men like Anandamohan Bose, Krishnabihari Sen, Rajanikanth Roy, who played an important part in the history of the Brahmo Samaj. Sivanath was then a student of the B.A. class, and was unknown to name and fame.

Sivanath had still his sacrificial thread. But, after the initiation, he felt that as a Brahmo he could not keep it on. A keen and poignant struggle ensued. On the one hand, there were conscientious scruples and on the other, the thought of the pain that would be caused to his parents and relations. After many days of inward conflict and wavering, Sivanath resolved to obey the voice of conscience and threw away the badge of Brahmanism. When his father heard of this he became highly displeased, came to Calcutta, and with his usual high-handedness took him forcibly to Mazilpore. There Sivanath was kept under restraint for about a month. His father tried his utmost to withdraw him from the company of Brahmos. But Sivanath was firm. Neither the violence of his father nor the tears and entreaties of his mother could move him from his determination. At last, in despair, his father drove him out from his house and forbade him to cross his threshold. From this time onwards he never spoke to him or saw his face for a period of about twenty years. This was a severe ordeal for the loving heart of Sivanath. Sivanath used to come at times to see his mother stealthily; but if his father got scent of it, he would chase him with a big stick. He even engaged professional ruffians to beat him.

Thus he was cut off from the home of his childhood. Fortunately he was getting a scholarship of Rs 59, and with this he brought his wife and child to Calcutta and kept them with him. He took rooms in a house in Pataldanga with an advanced Brahmo family, that of Babu Haragopal Sarcar. The wife of the latter Mrs Annadayini Sarkar, and her sister Miss Radharani Lahiri were educated Brahmo ladies. They were of much help to Sivanath's wife, who coming to Calcutta for the first time, was quite unacquainted with city life and had no education at all. Sivanath proceeded

to arrange for her education. A European missionary lady was engaged to teach her. It was remarkable how the orthodox Brahmin girl who had never had the benefit of education, rapidly progressed and proved to be a worthy wife of Sivanath by virtue of her innate goodness and breadth of heart, her loving consideration for all and her kindness to those in distress. She became a general favourite and came to be known as *Bado Ma* 'the elder mother' in the Brahmo Samaj.

After his initiation into Brahmoism, Sivanath rapidly came to the fore-front of the progressive section of the Brahmo Samaj and became very popular with all. With his natural earnestness, he threw himself into every noble enterprise. The Hindu and Christian communities in Calcutta were at this time convulsed with an agitation, owing to the conversion into christianity of a young Hindu widow belonging to a Baidya family which led to a law-suit, known as the Ganeshsundari case. Ganeshsundari was living with her mother and brothers in Calcutta, left her home without the knowledge of her guardians at the instigation of a Christian Missionary lady, who had been engaged to teach her. A case of abduction was brought in the High Court, which, however was dismissed on the ground that Ganeshsundari had attained majority and left her home voluntarily. This led to a strong agitation against Christian Missionaries, and the European gentleman in whose house Ganeshsundari was living, was one day assaulted while preaching in a public square. After a while Ganeshsundari repented her conduct and was anxious to come back but her Hindu relatives could not take her back. A few Brahmo gentlemen, who were interested in the case, requested Sivanath to take her in his newly established family to which Sivanath with his usual generosity readily agreed. Sivanath was still a student maintaining himself and his family with his scholarship. But in spite of his financial difficulties, he did not hesitate, as ever afterwards, to undertake the respons-

ibility. Ganeshsundari was the first of many girls in distress who found a ready home in Sivanath's family. She was afterwards married to an educated and respectable young man in good circumstances.

After his initiation into Brahmoism Sivanath was not only admitted into the inner circle of Brahmos, but was sought as a public speaker and preacher. He had already achieved considerable reputation as a poet. Even as a boy Sivanath began to write verses, many of which were of a distinct poetical merit. His uncle Dwarkanath Vidyabhusan published some of his earlier poems in the columns of *Samaprabakash* which was well-known for its high literary standard. Some of his poems were also published in the *Education Gazette*, which was then edited by Pyaricharan Sarcar and were much appreciated by the public. Towards the end of 1868, his first longer poem, 'Nirhasitar Bilap' (Lamentation of the Exile) was published and he was at once recognised as a rising poet of considerable merit. Indeed Sivanath had considerable poetical talent which, if he had assiduously cultivated, would have won for him a much higher place among the poets of modern Bengal. But owing to the pre-occupation and distraction involved in the work of the Brahmo Samaj, he neglected to develop his poetical powers. A literary critic once said with reference to Sivanath, 'the Brahmo Samaj has robbed Bengal of a great poet', meaning thereby that but for his absorption in the work of the Brahmo Samaj, Sivanath would have been a great poet.

However that may be, even still a student, Sivanath was much drawn into the work of the Brahmo Samaj and other public movements. His first appearance as a public preacher was possibly towards the end of 1869, soon after his initiation, on the occasion of the anniversary of the Shambazar Brahmo Samaj. The founder of the Samaj, Babu Kasiswar Mitra, requested him to take part in the anniversary service by preaching the sermon along with Ayodhyanath Pakdasi and Dwijendranath Tagore. Sivanath, who was

then 22 years of age, was very reluctant to sit on the pulpit with such veteran ministers and begged to be excused. But the organisers were insistent and Sivanath had to comply with their request much against his will. At the conclusion of the service Babu Dwjendranath Tagore embraced him and spoke highly of his sermon. A few days afterwards he was requested to take over charge of the Brahmo Samaj at the house of Gopalchandra Mallick at Sinduriapatti in succession to Pandit Ayodhyanath Pakdasi. Here also, though very reluctant to take such a responsible office, Sivanath could not decline the earnest request of the organisers. From this time he conscientiously carried on the duties of his office to the satisfaction of the entire congregation, conducting the service regularly week after week for several years. It was at the Sinduriapatti Samaj that the foundation of Sivanath's subsequent career as minister was laid. At the beginning of 1878, Kesav Chandra Sen went on his memorable visit to England and was away from India during the greater part of the year. Sivanath, who had already become greatly attached to Kesav, felt the separation keenly. After their first meeting at Koliahata, Kesav and Sivanath, the two kindred spirits, were naturally drawn to each other. Kesav took a keen and kind interest in Sivanath who in his turn had a profound regard for Kesav. After his return from England Kesav Chandra Sen throw himself into many new activities as a result of his English experiences and found in Sivanath a willing and useful assistant. He was particularly interested in the temperance movement initiated by Kesav Chandra Sen. Under his guidance was edited a monthly Journal in Bengali under the name, *Wine or Poison*. He also wrote frequently for the cheap pice paper *Sulabha Samachar* started by Kesav. In the midst of such manifold activities Sivanath passed the B.A. Examination in 1870 and the M.A. in 1872. He got the title of Sastri after having passed the M.A. Examination in Sanskrit. Originally he thought of becoming a lawyer at the suggestion of the

Principal of the Sanskrit College as the then Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal offered to take graduates from the Sanskrit College in the Judicial Service, as having facilities for the study of Hindu Law. Sivanath accordingly attended the Law class, but on closer association with Kesav Chandra Sen, the idea of consecrating himself to the mission work of the Brahmo Samaj dawned on his mind. Sivanath confided his aspiration to Kesave Chandra Sen, who encouraged him to persevere in incipient resolution and asked Sivanath to come and stay with him and the other missionaries in the Bharatasram. This was an institution which was started by Kesav Chandra Sen after his return from England with a view to form homes after the model of the middle class English homes. Here a number of Brahmo families used to live together as a joint family paying their own expenses. Kesav Chandra Sen himself came to live with them. They used to have joint divine service every morning and evening. The missionaries and the male inmates were greatly benefitted by the ministrations, company and conversations of Kesav. But the female inmates were not so happy, as they were not fired by the same religious enthusiasm and particularly owing to the privations and the inconveniences of the institution. Sivanath came to live in the Bharathasram with his wife and three children. He was appointed a teacher in the school for ladies in the Asram. The amount meant as his remuneration for his services as teacher was paid to the manager of the Asram, who spent it for his expenses. Sivanath worked whole-heartedly for the Asram. Among his pupils the most promising were Miss Radharani Sen, Miss Soudamini Khastagir, (afterwards Mrs. B. L. Gupta) and Mrs. Rajalakshmi Sen. The wife of Babu Kesav Chandra Sen was also one of his pupils. Sivanath was much appreciated by the ladies for efficient method of his teaching. Sivanath fresh from the College threw himself with enthusiasm into his work and lived cheerfully in the Asram; but soon afterwards he had to face a new trial. His second wife Birajamohini lived

in her father's house, ever since her marriage. But about this time, her father, mother, and brothers and sisters died in rapid succession within a short time. She became helpless. Her uncle came to Calcutta and asked Sivanath to take charge of her. Sivanath felt that it was his duty to look after her. He consulted Kesav Chandra Sen who approved of his taking charge of her. After consultation with Prasannamoyi he decided to bring her to Calcutta and keep her with Prasannamoyi in the Asram, where she would have opportunities of getting education. Sivanath still entertained the idea of getting Birajamohini married again; but in case she did not agree she would be able to shift for herself, if she were educated. Sivanath had no idea of taking her as his wife. Accordingly about the middle of 1862 Birajamohini was brought to Calcutta and began to live with Prasannamoyi in the Bharatasram. Since her arrival Sivanath used to sleep at night outside, sometimes in the open air on a bench in the College Square, sometimes in the veranda of the Hindu school. When his wives came to know of this they felt very miserable. When the project of getting Birajamohini married again was communicated to her, she was naturally horrified, and said that she would rather commit suicide. Sivanath realised that the only course left was to give her education. Accordingly she was admitted into the school of the Bharatasram.

Meanwhile frictions and misunderstandings began to appear among the inmates of the Asram. Differences of opinion grew up among the progressive Brahmos on various questions about the work of the Brahmo Samaj such as education, the position of women in the church, framing a constitution, exhibition of the Trust Deed in the Brahmo Mandir. Sivanath incurred the displeasure of the immediate followers of Kesav Chandra Sen on account of his independent spirit and outspokenness. Another subject, which created a sharp difference of opinion and led to frequent acrimonious discussions, was the doctrine of Adesh or 'Divine Command' which

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began to emerge from this time. Sivanath had also to criticise the conduct of the authorities of the Bharatasram for the treatment meted out to his friend, Babu Nagendranath Chatterjee and some other inmates of the Asram. Thus Sivanath was not feeling quite comfortable with his position in the Asram.

In the midst of these conflicts and controversies an unexpected call of duty took him away from Calcutta temporarily. About this time Sivanath's uncle Dwarakanath Vidyabhushan's health gave way. He was ordered by medical authorities to retire from service and go elsewhere for a long change. But besides his work in the Sanskrit College, he was the editor of the *Samaprakash* and Secretary of a High School which he had started in his native village. The *Samaprakash* Press also had been removed to Harinabhi—all these concerns required the constant attention of a responsible person. He sent for Sivanath and asked him to take over charge of these affairs. Sivanath was greatly indebted to his uncle and felt it be his duty to help him at this hour of need. On the other hand he had taken up the work of a teacher in the Bharat Asram at the request of Kesav Chandra Sen. He did not know what to do. On his return to Calcutta he consulted Kesav Chandra and other friends. Kesav did not say anything then; but Sivanath afterwards learnt that he did not like the idea of his going to Harinabhi as Kesav had expected that Sivanath would join the Mission work of the Brahmo Samaj. On the advice of other friends, however, Sivanath decided to remove to Harinabhi to help his uncle. Accordingly at the beginning of 1873 he went to Harinabhi as the head-master of the Harinabhi High School and the Editor of *Samaprakash*, relieving his uncle. Here he had to work very hard as the school was not in a sound condition. Besides editing *Samaprakash* he had to supervise the work of the press and look after the property and household of his uncle. Harinabhi and its neighbourhood was infected by Malaria about this time; and there was a municipality which

was in a very unsatisfactory condition. When Sivanath came to Harinabhi he threw himself heartily into the work of improving the condition of the place all round. He had opportunities to work out the institutions according to his own ideals, though he had to strive against the general indifference of the public and even the opposition of the interested parties. Here he could regulate his home life with greater freedom. When he first came to Harinabhi, he left his family in the Bharat Asrama; but shortly afterwards Kesav Chandra Sen sent for him and advised him to remove his family from Asram as Kesav Chandra Sen thought that they were un-happy there. He even apprehended that Birajamohini might commit suicide. Though Sivanath had no such apprehension, it was arranged after a long discussion that Brajamohini would live in a separate house with Babu Nagen-dranath Chatterjee and some other friends and Prasannamoyi would live with him at Harinabhi. Accordingly Sivanath brought Prasannamoyi and her children to Harinabhi and began to live in the school quarters. He brought his friend Babu Prakash Chandra Roy as an assistant teacher of the school. He lived with him, and this was a source of pleasure and benefit to both. Mrs. Roy also lived for a time in Sivanath's family and contributed much to the happiness of all.

While at Harinabhi another inmate was added to his household in the person of Lakshmimani, the second of the helpless girls who found a home in Sivanath's family. Lakshmimani was the daughter of an unfortunate woman of ill-fame of Dacca whom her mother intended to initiate her into unholy profession. A few young Brahmins of Dacca rescued her with the help of the Law-court and brought her to Calcutta in order to save her from the wiles of her mother. Failing to secure a suitable place in Calcutta, they brought her to Harinabhi where Sivanath and his wife readily took her in their own home.

During his short stay at Harinabhi Sivanath could render

much useful service to the locality, but his own health broke down owing to repeated attacks of malaria and heavy pressure of work. His friend and well-wisher Babu Radhika-prasanna Mukerjee, who was then Deputy Inspector of schools, having noticed Sivanath's stay of health, offered him the post of head-master of the Suburban school at Bhowanipur, which Sivanath accepted. Towards the end of 1874 he left Harinabhi after installing his friend Babu Umeshchandra Datta as the head-master of the Harinabhi school. Birajamohini was brought to Harinabhi and lived in his family, and Sivanath with Prasannamoyi lived at Bhawanipore. But Sivanath still continued to be the editor of *Samaparakash*. He would go to Harinabhi on Saturday, bring out the paper on Sunday and return to Calcutta on Monday morning to attend to School work. As this involved too much strain, after sometime the *Samaparakash* press was removed to Bhawanipore and the paper was published from there. Both the press and the paper improved under the new arrangement. After his removal to Bhawanipore, Sivanath started a Brahmo Samaj, the meetings of which were held at his own house. The Divine Service used to be mostly conducted by himself, sometimes friends like Babu Nagendranath Chatterjee and others from Calcutta helping him.

Sivanath faithfully discharged the duties of the minister of the Sinduriapati Brahmo Samaj which he had undertaken in 1870. Even when he had removed to Harinabhi he would come from there to Calcutta every week to conduct divine service. After his removal to Bhawanipore he made over the charge of the Sinduriapati Samaj to his friend Babu Kedar-nath Roy.

On his removal to Bhawanipore Sivanath was again drawn to the conflicts and controversies of the progressive section of the Brahmo Samaj which had gone on uninterrupted or rather increased in extent and intensity during his absence. The movement had now taken the definite form of an insistent demand for a constitution of the Brahmo Samaj of India.

The earlier differences on questions of female education, the position of women in the Church, management of the Bharat Asram and the administration of the Brahmo Samaj of India had developed considerably, leading to many unfortunate incidents involving mutual recriminations in the public press and even resort to Law Courts. In consequence, Keshub's influence over young men both within and outside the Brahmo Samaj had begun to decline. On his return, Sivanath found that the more radical wing of the party under the leadership of Dwarakanath Ganguli and Durgamohan Das and others had established an institution for the higher education of women which was at first named *Hindu Mahila Vidyalyaya* and afterwards *Banga Mahila Vidyalyaya*. In November 1874 a monthly journal under the name of the *Samadarsi* or *The Liberal* was started to voice the views and aspirations of the advanced party. Sivanath was called upon to be the editor of the paper. The greater portion of the contributions were from his pen. Naturally he was considered the leader of the party. Sivanath contributed frequently to the columns of the *Samadarsi* in which he had to criticise some of the views and utterances of Keshub Chandra Sen. On the other hand Keshub Chandra Sen and his followers treated him with scant consideration and wrote unkindly against the party of the advanced Brahmos, using such epithets as 'Sceptics, Secularists, and Unbelievers'. Thus the gulf between the two wings of the progressive party of the Brahmo Samaj went on widening and the influence of Keshub Chandra Sen on the younger generation was considerably weakened. When Sivanath settled down at Bhawanipore, the advanced party would frequently meet in his house.

While at Bhawanipore Sivanath came into close contact with Babu Durgamohan Das, an earnest reformer and a Brahmo of advanced views, who had removed from Barisal to join the bar of the Calcutta High Court in the year 1871. He was a staunch advocate of female education and amelioration of the condition of women. Sivanath had a high regard

for him and his wife Brahmamoyi Devi and was in an intimate touch with the family.

Another event of this period was his acquaintance with Ramkrishna Paramahansa, which soon developed into warm mutual love and regard. While at Bhawanipore Sivanath heard of Ramakrishna Paramahansa as an earnest devotee from a friend and was anxious to see him. Just about that time it was reported in the columns of the *Sunday Mirror* that Keshub Chandra Sen met Ramakrishna Paramahansa and was highly impressed with his earnest spirituality. Pandit Sastri went to Dakshineswar and from the first visit there sprang up a mutual regard which, within a short time, deepened into warm friendship. Pandit Sastri used to visit him frequently, and Ramakrishna Paramahansa would be unhappy if he did not see him for sometime.

While at Bhawanipore another helpless girl was admitted into his household. One afternoon Pandit Sastri on his return home from school found that a young woman had come to his house and asked for shelter. She said she had no place to go to. Pandit Sastri had already a helpless girl, Lakshminiani, under his care besides his own children, four daughters and one son. His income was small and there were many calls on his purse. But he and, especially his wife Prasannamayee had a tender heart, and they could not turn out the helpless girl. Henceforth the stranger helpless woman remained in their household.

Pandit Sastri was the headmaster of the South Suburban School at Bhawanipore for about a year and half. In 1876 his ever generous friend and well wisher, Babu Radhika Prasanna Mukherjee got him appointed to the post of Head Pandit and teacher of translation in the Hare school. For sometime Sivanath used to come to the school from Bhawanipore, but when his uncle Pandit Dwarkanath Vidyabhusan returned from charge and took over charge of the *Samaprabh* and its press, Pandit Sastri removed with his family to a house in

Ahmerst Street. On his removal to Calcutta the advanced section of the Brahmos, who had come to be known as the *Samadarsi* party grew stronger. Their efforts definitely shaped into two proposals, namely, that of selection of a body of Trustees and the execution of a Trust Deed for the Prayer Hall of the Brahmo Samaj of India in Machuabazar Road and the formation of a representative Committee for the conduct of the work of the Brahmo Samaj. Keshab Chandra had separated from Maharshi Debendranath Tagore on the plea of the lack of a representative Governing body of the Brahmo Samaj. His avowed object had been placing of the administration of the Brahmo Samaj on a constitutional basis ; but when the Brahmo Samaj of India was well established the question of a constitution was neglected. There were two bodies namely the Brahmo Samaj of India and the Calcutta Congregation. Babu Keshub Chandra Sen was the Secretary and Pratap Chandra Mazumdar the Assistant Secretary of the former and the same two gentlemen were also the minister and secretary respectively of the latter. Meetings were seldom held and the Brahmo public had neither any hand in the administration of the Brahmo Samaj nor any opportunity for discussing its affairs. The *Samadarsi* party pressed for the execution of the Trust Deed for the *Brahma Mandir* and for the organisation of a committee of representatives at successive annual meetings ; but they were postponed from year to year. The question of the election of Trustees was evaded on the plea that there was yet an outstanding debt. Some members however undertook to pay off the debt ; still no step was taken to execute the Trust Deed. Similarly the proposal for forming a representative committee was not allowed to make much progress. On one occasion a sub-committee was formed of which Keshub Chandra Sen himself became a member and a few rules were framed ; but the matter stopped there. The younger men grew dissatisfied and restless. Mr. Anandamohan Bose, who had returned to India after the completion of his studies in England about this time and had thrown himself into the

work of the Brahmo Samaj, though not identified with the *Samadarsi* party, was in agreement with them in their efforts for securing a constitution of the Brahmo Samaj and was particularly anxious for the execution of the Trust Deed. Backed by his influence, the agitation grew more and more insistent. It was at this period that Sivanath came into close contact with Anandamohan Bose which led to the formation of an intimate life-long friendship between these two remarkable persons. Together they laboured for many long years in close fellowship. One of their first ventures was the foundation of the Indian Association which was meant to be the mouth-piece of the educated middle class people of the country. It was established on the 26th July 1876 with Mr. A. M. Bose as Secretary and Rev. K. M. Banerjee as its first President. Pandit Sivanath Sastri took an active part in its work and organisation at the beginning, though later on owing to the pre-occupation with the work of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj his share in the activities of the Indian Association decreased.

In the beginning of 1877 Pandit Sastri fell seriously ill. A few days earlier he had gone to Harinabhi on the occasion of a domestic ceremony in the house of his friend Babu Umesh Chandra Dutta in connection with which a large number of Brahmo friends including Babu Rajnarayan Bose had gathered together. Both Rajnarayan Bose and Pandit Sastri were very witty conversationalists. Whenever they met together there used to be much merriment. On this occasion there was a competition between the two in humorous story-telling which made the party roar with laughter till about 2 A.M. in the early hours of the morning. Either due to this or the Malaria of Harinabhi, Pandit Sastri had a severe attack of fever on his return to Calcutta. More over there were strictures of blood in his spitting. Dr. Mahendralal Sarkar under whose treatment he was placed suspected Pthisis.

Friends, as well as he himself were anxious about his life.



Father of Sivamath Sastri.

Pandit Sastri wrote a letter to his father informing him of his illness. Since his initiation into Brahmoism, for nearly a period of eight years, his father had not seen his face. But on the receipt of the news of his illness he collected a little money by mortgaging the jewels of his wife and came with her to Calcutta. Leaving his wife in the house of Sivanath, which he himself did not enter, his father went to fetch an Ayurvedic physician for the son. For several days he stayed in Calcutta making arrangements for his son's medical treatment, but himself did not see his face or enter the house. His relatives threatened to excommunicate him for sending his wife to live with his son ; but the fiery old man boldly defied them. The conduct of another person at this time, Pandit Sastri has recorded in his autobiography with warm gratitude. This was his faithful servant Khodai. Pandit Sastri had engaged him while at Bawanipore ; but when he took leave on half-pay on account of his illness, he got an employment for Khodai under a friend ; but after a while Khodai not only came back to his house and worked for him without any pay but provided his household expenses without his knowledge by pledging his small jewels. Soon after Pandit Sastri's recovery Khodai fell ill. Pandit Sastri had him sent home after paying all his dues and continued to send his pay month after month, but the faithful servant died not long after.

After partial recovery Pandit Sastri was advised to go for a change. Accordingly he went to Monghyer with his family. On the day after his arrival there his youngest child Sarojini fell from the Veranda of the house in which they were living, and died on the spot. This cast a gloom on the family. After staying at Monghyer for sometime he returned to Calcutta leaving his family at Monghyer and joined his work. About this time his second volume of poems was published under the name *Pushpamala* (the garland of flowers). It considerably added to his reputation as a poet of talent.

On his recovery and return to Calcutta Pandit Sastri was again drawn to the politics of the Brahmo Samaj, daily growing more and more violent and complicated. Now we approach the most important epoch in the life of Pandit Sastri. Unknown to himself, Providence had been preparing him for his great life-work. He was soon called upon to face a momentous crisis in the history of the Brahmo Samaj, in which though he had many able and influential colleagues he was unquestionably the most active worker. It became now known that negotiations were going on for the marriage of the eldest daughter of Babu Keshub Chandra Sen with the minor Maharaja of Cooch Behar. Both the bride and bride-groom were below the lowest marriagable age fixed by Babu Keshub Chandra Sen himself after a prolonged discussion and agitation. The Brahmo public were disheartened at the news. It produced grave dissatisfaction and Keshub's conduct began to be criticised in private and public. In January, 1878, Babu Jadav Chandra Chakravarti, Magistrate of Cooch Behar, came to Calcutta to settle the details of the marriage. Authentic information was now received about the match. The agitation among the Brahmos against the proposal daily grew in strength and volume; and within a short time not only the Brahmo Samaj but the educated public of Bengal were convulsed. The Brahmo Samaj of India was broken to pieces. We need not here give details of this sad event. It has been recorded in full by both the parties. Pandit Sastri though called to play the leading part on one side, entered into it with extreme reluctance and worked throughout from a constraining sense of duty. He might have made mistakes, young and inexperienced as he was, but he always endeavoured to follow the dictates of reason and conscience. When the agitation in the Brahmo Samaj grew intense and violent, he and his friend Anandamohan Bose felt that it was their duty to see Keshub Chandra Sen personally and ascertain the facts directly from him. Accordingly they called on Keshub Chandra Sen and asked for information, but the

leader of the Brahmo Samaj of India studiously evaded compliance with their wishes. On being informed of the strong feeling among the Brahmo public he became excited. In their despair the friends retired with a heavy heart. Failing to elicit any information directly, the Brahmo public sent a written representation signed by twenty-six leading Brahmos headed by the venerable Sib Chandra Dev; but it was reported that Keshub Chandra Sen throw it into the waste paper basket. It was however announced in the *Sunday Mirror* of the 9th February 1878, that the marriage would take place at Cooch Behar shortly. A committee was formed to watch over the proceedings and to devise means to counteract their evil effects on the Brahmo Samaj. Pandit Sivanath Sastri was a member of the Committee. The fateful marriage took place in the month of March with objectionable and idolatrous ceremonies which disappointed and pained Keshub Chandra Sen himself. The Brahmo public now tried to hold a meeting to consider the conduct of Babu Keshub Chandra Sen, Secretary of the Brahmo Samaj of India and minister of its congregation in Calcutta. Many obstacles were thrown in their way. But at last, on the 15th of May, at a public meeting in the Town Hall of Calcutta presided over by Anandamohan Bose, a separate organisation was formed under the name of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj. Henceforth Pandit Sivanath Sastri was wholly occupied with the work of building up the new organisation. 152545

Meanwhile a serious inward struggle was going on in the mind of Pandit Sastri. We have seen that before the close of his educational career he felt a strong inclination to devote his life to the service of the Brahmo Samaj. But owing to adverse domestic circumstances he had to accept secular work. His mind, however, was not easy in this situation and the aspiration to serve the Brahmo Samaj, though stifled for a time, grew strong year after year till by the end of 1876, it had engrossed his mind and heart. It even affected his health. Thus the struggle went on

throughout the year 1877. On the one hand there was a call to consecrate himself to the service of the Brahmo Samaj; on the other there were domestic and financial considerations. He was the only son and support of his aged parents. He had two wives and children to maintain for whom there was no provision at all. There was no organisation which would help him at this period. All his friends dissuaded him from taking the step. Even his intimate friend Anandamohan Bose, to whom he confided all his struggles, advised him to wait. But he had no peace of mind. In the agony of his mind, he had recourse to prayer, and the path became clear to him. On the 15th of February 1878 he made up his mind to give up secular work and handed over his letter of resignation to the Director of Public Instruction. Had he waited a few days longer, he would have been entitled to the usual bonus of two or three hundred rupees. But even the delay of a day was intolerable to him. He felt relieved when he forwarded his resignation to the authorities. The Principal of the Presidency College and the Director of Public instruction advised him to reconsider the serious step he was taking and offered him time to think over the matter carefully. But Pandit Sastri would not wait a day longer. Henceforth he devoted his undivided attention to the work of the Brahmo Samaj from the beginning of March 1878. He was then in his 31st year. The Sadharan Brahmo Samaj had not yet been formed. His family was still at Monghyer. But he had no time to think of them. All his attention was absorbed in the great struggle over the Cooch Behar marriage. A fortnightly paper in Bengali called the *Samalochak* was started, and Pandit Sastri was appointed its editor. An English weekly Journal called the *Brahmo Public Opinion* was also started, to the columns of which Pandit Sastri had to contribute largely.

After the foundation of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj the time and energy of Pandit Sastri and his friends and colleagues were absorbed in the work of framing a

suitable constitution for the new organisation. They were anxious to avoid the evils and mistakes of the Brahmo Samaj of India and the Adi Brahmo Samaj in both of which all power concentrated in the hands of a single person. They were determined that the new body should be a thoroughly democratic institution and took every care to prevent the concentration of power in one person. Pandit Sastri had a leading share in this work. He had to work very hard at this time. He was the editor of the *Tatwakormudi*, the fortnightly Bengali organ of the newly constituted Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, which was started on the 16th Jyaishta (29th May 1878). He was also Assistant Editor of the *Brahmo Public Opinion* and was responsible for the religious and devotional columns of the paper. There were days when he had to work from early morning to evening in connection with these papers, and then he had to sit up till 2 A. M. at the committee meetings for the framing of the constitution. But his chief work in connection with the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj was that of ministration. Comparatively young though he was, he was called upon to take up the work of one of the ministers of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj from its inception. At the very first divine service held by the organisers of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj at a private house in Machua-bazar Road, when they were turned out from the prayer Hall of the Brahmo Samaj of India, Pandit Sastri was called upon to officiate as minister.

One of the earliest matters to which the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj had to attend to was the organisation of Mission work. Pandit Sastri along with Pandit Bijaykrishna Goswami, Pandit Ramkumar Vidvaratna, and Babu Ghanesh Chandra Ghosh, was provisionally accepted as a missionary of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj. So n afterwards, on the 24th May, 1878, Pandit Sastri started on a mission tour, the first of many of its kind in Behar and the North Western Provinces. He first visited Monghyr, where his family was still staying. From Monghyr he

went to Matihari, owing to the absence of railway communication the journey was difficult and fatiguing. He visited various places in the course of the tour. While at Lucknow, he received a telegram informing him of the illness of his daughter who was then staying in a hostel in Calcutta for her education. So he had to retrace his steps and come back to Calcutta, bringing down his family from Monghyr. On his return to Calcutta he took up again the work of a minister of the Calcutta congregation, and editor of the *Tatwakoumudi*. But the work which chiefly engaged the time and attention of Pandit Sastri and his colleagues was the building of a new Mandir for the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj. When the organisers of the S. B. Samaj were turned out as the result of the schism, from the Prayer Hall of the Brahmo Samaj of India, for the construction of which they had paid liberally, they began to work again for the erection of a new Mandir. They could secure a plot of land on Cornwallis Street, and many promised to contribute a month's income to the building fund. Pandit Sastri could secure a donation of Rs. 7000 from the venerable Maharshi Debendranath Tagore. Within six months the arrangements made considerable progress, and the foundation stone of the Mandir was laid during the Maghotsav in January, 1879.

Another important work which Pandit Sastri took up along with his friend Anandamohan Bose about this time was the starting of a new school. Both the friends had long thought of an educational institution for imparting efficient education on sound lines. But owing to the troubles due to the secession from the Brahmo Samaj of India, they could not give effect to the idea. On the sixth of January 1879, they started a school, under the name of the City School, at a rented house in Mirzapur Street. Mr. Bose advanced the funds for the initial expenses and Pandit Sivanath Sastri was the first secretary and organiser. He used to go the school every day. He had to attend to the minute details of administration and also to take part in teaching

work. Mr. Surendranath Banerjee became one of the teachers of the school, which rapidly grew in numbers and popularity. It became self-supporting almost from the beginning. Within a few months of the foundation the money advanced by Mr. Bose was repaid. Within a short time the City School took high rank among the educational institutions of Calcutta. In 1881, it was raised to the status of a second grade college affiliated to the Calcutta University and in 1884 to that of a first Grade College with provision for teaching Arts, Science and Law. In 1918 a superb building was constructed in Amherst Street for the College classes, the old house being occupied by the school Department alone. The City College and the school have had more than 2000 students in recent years and have enjoyed a uniform reputation for a high moral tone and strict discipline; and their students have often taken a high place in the University Examinations.

It was about this time that another important institution was commenced. In 1879, Pandit Sastri in co-operation with his friend Anandamohan Bose started the students weekly service. Pandit Sastri had for sometime past been thinking of organising a Samaj or prayer meeting for the students. A similar institution which had been started by Mr. A. M. Bose after his return from England had become extinct. The two friends now planned to establish an organisation for youngmen with a greater religious element in it. The Students' Weekly Service which was started in the City school was transferred to the Prayer Hall of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj after the building had been completed. It was here that for over a quarter of a century Pandit Sastri laboured incessantly for the moral and spiritual progress of the young men of Calcutta. In connection with it, week after week, he used to deliver lectures which had a great influence on successive batches of young men drawn from various parts of Bengal. His lectures in Bengali were a treat to the young and the old alike. Pandit Sastri was unquestionably

one of the best, if not the best, speakers in Bengali. Under his ministration, the Students' Weekly Service became a powerful agency in the intellectual, moral and religious life of Bengal. It helped to mould the life and character of young men who came to Calcutta for their education and carried the leaven in their after-life in different parts of the country. Many youngmen were recruited and became permanent assets to the Brahmo Samaj through the Students' Weekly Service. It was in connection with this institution that some of his most powerful lectures such as those on caste system, prayer, etc. were delivered. The impression still lives in the minds of those who attended them. They thrilled and charmed the audience and raised them to a high pitch of enthusiasm. At the close of his lecture on cast system, two Brahmin young men tore off their sacrificial thread on the spot. An orthodox gentleman of the old school who was not at all sympathetic towards Pandit Sastri but rather reasons to be hostile to him, once remarked "one feels inclined to stand and hear him for hours." It may be safely said that in the eloquent use of the Bengali language there have been few his equals. It is to be regretted that most of his speeches have not been preserved.

CHAPTER III.

MISSIONARY LIFE.

Along with his various activities in Calcutta Pandit Sivanath Sastri carried on an extensive mission work throughout the length and breadth of India. We can have an idea of the extent of his mission work from the following summary of his work in 1879 taken from the Annual Report of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj 1879 :—“The travels of Pandit Sivanath Sastri extended over to some parts of Bengal and Behar, N. W. Provinces, Punjab, Scinde, Bombay, and Guzarat, a distance taken aggregately of about 5000 miles. His mission work commenced with his visit to the Rampurhat Brahmo Samaj in the beginning of March, to celebrate its anniversary. Towards the end of that month he paid a visit to Krishnagar and Pabna whither he was specially invited by the local Brahmos. The Pabna Samaj which had been existing only in name received a new impetus from his visit. After his return from Pabna he stopped for a short time at Calcutta and then left for North-West Provinces and the Punjab towards the end of May. On his way to Lahore he visited Bankipore, Agra and Tondla. Everywhere he had prayer meetings, made efforts for the collection of subscription for the Prayer Hall of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj and delivered public lectures. At Lahore he stayed for about a month, delivering lectures presiding at prayer meetings, holding religious conferences and devoting his spare time to the study of Hindi. During this period he twice visited Amritsar. His lectures and discussions with all classes of people created some sensation and kindled up the drooping spirits of the very few Brahmos residing in that place. From Amritsar he proceeded to Mooltan. His stay there though short was very useful.

He conducted divine service in Hindi, daily carried on religious discussions and delivered two English lectures, which were received with an outburst of enthusiasm. The members of the Mooltan Samaj entertained him with warm hospitality. From Mooltan he proceeded to Hyderabad, a city situated on the Eastern bank of the Indus. He stayed here for more than a week, conducted divine service in Hindi, delivered one lecture and two sermons in English carried on discussion with some Pandits in Sanskrit, and expounded in Hindi the principles of Theism to an assembled crowd of Scindhis. From Hyderabad he went down to Karachi with a view to take steamer for Bombay. He stayed at Karachi for three days, but this short time was used with best advantage. He delivered discourses in Hindi and English, besides conducting divine service in English and Hindi and preaching English sermons from the pulpit of the Prarthana Samaj Mandir. He also delivered an English address to the students of the Elphinstone College, the Principal of the College presiding. His lectures and discourses were much appreciated by the educated people of Bombay. From Bombay he proceeded to Ahmadabad, the chief city of Guzarat, where he stayed for more than a week. His lectures and sermons at this place caused considerable sensation. He was courted by all classes of people and he held daily discussion in English, Hindi and Sanskrit with his visitors. The excessive work to which he had subjected himself from some time before, laid him up at last. His health gave way. He was scarcely restored to health before he started for Baroda and Surat whence there were urgent invitations. At Baroda he was received as a state guest by the order of Sir T. Madhav Rao. His stay in the city of the Gaikwar was very short. During the two days he stayed there, he delivered two discourses in English and created much interest for the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj. From Baroda he came to Surat the oldest city in the

British Indian History. Here a number of Deccanees and Guzarattee gentlemen had established a Prarthana Samaj. Pandit Sastri preached a sermon in English which was very warmly received. From Surat he returned to Bombay with impaired health and had to give up his idea of visiting Poona and Madras. He returned to Calcutta in the beginning of October 1879. On his way back he passed through Jubbulpore and Allahabad in both of which places he presided at prayer-meetings and delivered public lectures. In the beginning of November last the Pandit once more proceeded to the North West being specially invited by the Dehrah Dun Samaj to conduct their anniversary festival. On his way back from Dehra Dun he paid a flying visit to Umbala. During the two days he was there he got up a meeting to which the educated Bengalis and Hindustanis of the station were invited. The Pandit explained principles of Theism in English to the Hindustanis and delivered a discourse in Bengali on the *Necessity and Reasonableness of worshipping God*. After his return to Calcutta he was again called away by the Faridpore Samaj to celebrate their anniversary. Then again in the metropolis the Pandit rendered good service by his ministration in connection with the Calcutta congregation."

His mission work was carried on in a truly apostolic spirit. Often he had to go on his tours in the spirit of Christ's teaching without a scrib or purse. We have a remarkable illustration not only of his trust in God but also of the wonderful Providence of the Lord in the lives of his devoted servants, in the long tour of Pandit Sastri in 1879. Fortunately for us Pandit Sastri has recorded in full in his autobiography. It deserves to be preserved as a precious heritage for future generations of seekers after God.

The executive committee of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj requested him to undertake a mission tour throughout India. Accordingly Pandit Sastri decided to start from Calcutta in May 1879. He had expected that the committee

would provide for his passage expenses as they had passed a resolution on the tour. But on the day of starting when he called at the office he was told that they had no money. The officer in charge of the office could somehow find eight rupees and a few annas by searching the cash box. With this amount, Pandit Sastri decided to proceed on his proposed tour as he had already written about it to several friends. He had thought of going direct to Agra without stopping at any intermediate stations as he had visited them last year. He wanted to meet his friend Babu Nabin Chandra Roy at Agra who was to leave that station shortly. But the amount he got would not suffice to meet the Railway Charges to Agra. So he decided to halt at Bankipore where his friend Babu Prokash Chandra Roy was then living. He thought he would get some money from him, for his passage expenses. So who purchased a ticket for Bankipore and started on his tour. As he alighted from the train at the Bankipore station he saw his friend Prakash Chandra Roy on the platform. Prakash Chandra Roy was a Government officer and was going on an official business by the same train. He was surprised to meet him unexpectedly and regretted his unavoidable absence; but he asked him to go to his house, where his wife would look after him. Prakash Chandra Roy said that he would return in four days, but about a fortnight passed away and he did not yet return. Pandit Sastri with the help of some friends utilised the time in getting up and addressing some meetings. It was during this enforced leisure at Bankipore that he wrote his first novel, *The Mejo Bou* the second Daughter in law. It is one of the finest novels in Bengali and has passed through several editions. When over a fortnight passed away and his friend did not return, he felt he could not stay there any longer, but there was the question of the train fare. At times he had thought of asking for some money from the wife of his friend, but he again considered she might not have money beyond her household

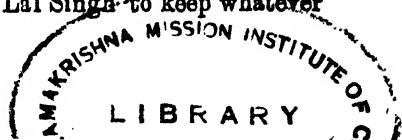
expenses. The balance Pandit Sastri had with him would carry him as far as Dumraon, a few miles further off, where a Brahmo gentleman, Babu Brajendra Kumar Bose, was living. So he decided to leave for Dumraon. As he was arranging his luggage, a Bengali gentleman named Babu Tinkari Ghosh, whose acquaintance he made for the first time, came and entered into a conversation with him. He said, "is it a fact that you are going on a tour round India ?" On receiving a reply in the affirmative he further said, "may I make a request ?" Pandit Sastri asked what it was. The visitor said he would like to make a small contribution towards his passage expenses if permitted. Pandit Sastri thankfully accepted the offer, saying that the work of the Brahmo Samaj was carried on by such contributions from generous people. The gentleman paid Rs. 3, which Pandit Sastri found by calculation would carry him as far as Allahabad. Now Pandit Sastri gave up the idea of halting at Dumraon and decided to proceed direct to Allahabad. When he was starting another gentleman came and gave him Rs. 3 in payment of his dues to the Brahmo Samaj. Pandit Sastri thought of utilising this amount for his passage expenses, intimating the fact to the Calcutta office, which would enable him to go direct to Agra. On his arrival at Agra, he found that Babu Nabin Chandra Roy had packed up his things and was to leave Agra next morning. In the short time left he introduced Pandit Sastri to some of his friends at Agra and requested them to arrange for his work. Pandit Sastri had only eight annas left in his pocket. As he found his friend very busy and as he was about to begin an expensive journey, he could not ask him for a contribution towards his passage expenses as he had intended. At Agra he did some mission work. Now what was to be done for his passage expenses to Lahore ? There was none at the place whom he could ask for money. He had heard that there was a Brahmo Gentleman at Tundla ; the eight annas he had with him would take him there; so he decided to go to

Tundla and find out the Brahmo gentleman there and ask him for some money. Accordingly one afternoon he left for Tundla. Two trains had come from opposite sides and the station was crowded. He was waiting on the platform with the idea that when the trains had left he would ask the railway officers about the whereabouts of the Brahmo gentleman. Suddenly a tall dark Bengali came and prostrated himself before his feet. On his rising Pandit Sastri recognised that he was a former compositor in the *Samaprakash* press, whom he had dismissed for some misconduct. Pandit Sastri was surprised to find him there. He was equally surprised to see Pandit Sastri at Tundla and asked how he came there. Pandit Sastri told him that he was going to Lahore and asked the address of the Brahmo gentleman. The compositor told him that he was no longer a Brahmo and requested him with much earnestness to be his guest during his stay at Tundla. He said that he had been their servant, and though he had dismissed him he was grateful to him for the punishment which he richly deserved and which had been for his good. After his dismissal he had been to Tundla and was employed in the Loco office. Pandit Sastri was too glad to find any shelter and went with him to his house. But the question still remained how to find out the train fare to Lahore. While starting from Calcutta he had decided not to write to Calcutta for his passage expenses but would collect it from Brahmos on the way; but here there was no Brahmo. Though his host was very respectful, he felt ashamed to ask him for money as he had been a subordinate whom he himself dismissed. He stayed two days at Tundla and utilised the time in holding a meeting at the Local School-compound with the permission of the Headmaster. He could not stay any longer there and at last decided to borrow the amount necessary for going to Lahore from his host. Accordingly he told him that next morning he would leave for Lahore. But still he felt ashamed to ask him for money, though often he was about to do so. Next morning before Pandit

Sastri got up, his host went to the office giving instructions to his people to prepare his breakfast. A little before the train time, he returned home and requested Pandit Sastri to get ready as there was not much time left. Now Pandit Sastri felt that he could no longer put off the unpalatable necessity and must ask him for lending the money. Accordingly as a preliminary, he inquired what was the fare to Lahore. His host said 'you need not trouble about that, Sir, I have already purchased a ticket for you lest you will decline to accept any help from me.' Pandit Sastri was taken by surprise at this unexpected turn of affairs. On the way he meditated over the strange dealings of God. He realised that at every step God had been providing his needs in an unexpected manner, while he had been worrying himself by trusting on his own resources.

On the 11th June he arrived at Lahore and became the guest of Pandit Sibnarayan Agnihotri, who was then a teacher of Survey in the Lahore Government College and subsequently became missionary of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj. Pandit Sastri stayed at Lahore for about a Month and delivered a lecture on the untenableness of infallible scriptures which drew him into prolonged controversy with the newly founded Arya Samaj; and he did other work as well.

While at Lahore a young man named Lal Singh asked permission to accompany him on his tour, as his companion. Though Pandit Sastri had no provision for his travelling expenses he accepted the offer of Lal Singh after prayerful consideration, as by this time he had gained more trust in the Providence of God. He felt that the Lord will provide. That very same night he received a letter from Sardar Dayal Singh Mejjithia, a wealthy Sikh land-holder enclosing Rs 50- for his expenses. Pandit Sastri made over the amount to Lal Singh giving instructions to meet his expenses from the amount and not to spend a pice out of it for himself. He had made a bag in which he asked Lal Singh to keep whatever



money people would give for their expenses. He had a paper with the inscription 'beg not, borrow not, and refuse not'.

After finishing the work at Lahore Pandit Sastri proceeded to Multan accompanied by Lal Singh. There was a Brahmo Samaj at Multan at that time, the work of which was carried on by some Bengali officers and Panjabi residents. Pandit Sastri was received with warm enthusiasm. He was requested to be a guest in a Bengali family, who looked after all his needs with great regard. A few days were spent at Multan to the delight of all. On the day of departure from Multan, as he was going to the station he felt that somebody had put his hand into his pocket. He suspected a thief or pickpocket but on turning round, he found a sikh gentleman who said with a smile, "it is a trifle ; you need not see it now. You may see it in the train." Afterwards Pandit Sastri found that there were notes worth Rs. 20. He took it out with a prayerful heart and put it into the bag in the custody of Lal Singh. Thus their needs were being met from the voluntary gifts of sympathetic persons. From Multan they passed on to Succur, Hyderabad and Karachi, preaching the message of the Brahmo Samaj everywhere. At Hyderabad, he was a guest of Navalrai Shankiram Advani by whose genuine piety, profound devotion and earnest benevolence, he was deeply impressed. He had built a Mandir in a beautiful locality where besides the weekly congregational services, friends used to meet for prayer and meditation every evening.

On the 29th of August 1879 he arrived at Bombay. After a few days' stay in Bombay which was spent in useful work and inspiring fellowship with the leaders of the Bombay Prarthana Samaj like B. M. Wagley, Narayan Paramananda, Ramkrishna Gopal Bhandarkar, Mahadev Govinda Ranade, Mr. Kunte, Telang, W. B. Nowrangee, Pandit Sastri proceeded to Ahmedabad via Surat, leaving Lal Singh in Bombay. At Ahmedabad he was the guest of Bholanath Sarabhai. Here also he could do some useful work and was much impres-



Sivamath Sastri's first wife.

sed by genuine piety of Bholanath Sarabhai. On his return journey he halted at Baroda, where he reached on 26th September and was received as a state guest by Sir T. Madhava Rao, the Dewan. He had thought of proceeding to Madras Presidency, but on his return to Bombay, he received a telegram from Calcutta intimating the necessity of his immediate presence in Calcutta. Accordingly he started for Allahabad via Jubbulpore accompanied by Lal Singh. At Allahabad Lal Singh received news that his mother was seriously ill at Amritsar; so he must return there. On counting the cash in their bag it was found out that there was sufficient money for Lal Singh to go to Amritsar and Pandit Sastri to Calcutta. Thus ended the memorable tour of 1879.

Pandit Sastri undertook many such mission tours in subsequent years travelling long distances in different parts of the country working hard and undergoing many privations. It will not be possible, to give a full account of these tours in this short sketch. We shall only refer to them in brief in the sequel.

Indeed throughout his missionary life Pandit Sivanath Sastri lived and worked on the principle of dependence on the providence of God. When he resigned government service to consecrate himself to the mission work of the Brahmo Samaj there was no visible provision for his maintenance. The Sadharan Brahmo Samaj had not yet been organised. And even after its foundation the provision it could make for the maintenance of missionaries was utterly inadequate for the bare necessities of Pandit Sastri. The allowance he received from the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj during the greater part of his life was Rs. 50. He had a large family of his own and there were always many helpless dependents on him. It was quite a marvel how the needs of this large family were met with, considerable credit was due to his wife, Prasannamayee Devi, who managed the household with admirable ability and economy and relieved Pandit Sastri

of the anxiety for the household management. Pandit Sastri was an examiner of the Calcutta University from the year 1880 and used to get on an average Rs. 500 annually which must have been of great help to him. He also earned a considerable amount by his books and writings in the press. But the greater part of his earnings was spent in financing various institutions of the Brahmo Samaj. However all his needs were provided for and he could say with his full heart, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want."

After his return to Calcutta, he was again busily engaged in the work of the various institutions of the Brahmo Samaj. The Maghotsav of 1880 was observed by the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj in their unfinished prayer Hall in Cornwallis Street. On this occasion, Pandit Sastri was formally ordained as a missionary of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj along with Pandit Bojoy Krishna Goswami, Pandit Sibnarayan Agnihotri and Ram Kumar Vidyaratna.

During the year 1880 Pandit Sastri had to be busy with the construction of the Prayer Hall of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj. The foundation stone of the Mandir was laid during the Maghotsav of 1879. The Maghotsav of 1880 was held in the unfinished Mandir and it was hoped and resolved that the Mandir should be completed before the Maghotsav of 1881. But a few months previously it was noticed that the work had not sufficiently advanced. In consequence Pandit Sastri had to devote himself to the work of the construction of the Mandir. In this connection they had to work hard and the Mandir could be completed in the appointed time. The Prayer Hall was consecrated on the 10th Magh amidst great enthusiasm. It was a memorable day indeed when the venerable Sib Chandra Deb opened the door of the new Mandir in the midst of Universal rejoicings within three years of the foundation of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj. It was very creditable for the

organisers of the new Samaj of whom Pandit Sastri was one of the prominent leaders.

In 1881 Pandit Sastri went on his first mission tour to the Madras Presidency. There was, then, not any Railway communication between Calcutta and Madras. Leaving Calcutta soon after the Maghotsav in 1881, he reached Madras by steamer about the middle of February. He was heartily welcomed by Mr. Buchayya Pantulu and other members of the Madras Brahmo Samaj. A room was rented for him and food was sent there from the house of Mr. Buchayya Pantulu. Madras was yet socially very backward and even members of the Brahmo Samaj were shocked by Pandit Sastri's heterodox ways. Pandit Sastri delivered several lectures on religious and social matters. He delivered a lecture on 'the general condition of the country' in the Pachappa's Hall, which created some sensation. Speaking of the extravagance of the British Government he complained of the high taxation and remarked that even the poor man's salt was not free from duty. The *Madras Mail* commenting on the lecture attributed the necessity of salt tax to the fact that Bengal did not pay her legitimate share of the revenue and attacked the Bengalees in general. Pandit Sastri wrote a letter in defence of the Bengalees and sent a copy of the *Madras Mail* to Babu Krishnodas Pal, the Editor of the *Hindu Patriot*. Krishnadas Pal wrote an article with facts and figures headed *Bengal the Milch Cow of the British Government of India*. All these made his name quite familiar to the Madras public and Pandit Sastri was in great demand as a public speaker in different parts of Madras City and the Presidency.

About this time Pandit Viresalingam Pantulu of Rajamundry had initiated a vigorous campaign in favour of reform in general and widow remarriage in particular. Viresalingam Pantulu has been called the Vidyasagar of Southern India. Indeed no two public men resembled each

other so closely as Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar Viresalingam Pantulu. Viresalingam belonged to a respectable Brahmin family and was a Pandit in the Government service. Like Vidyasagar he had a fearless independent spirit. He was a prolific writer and was the creator of Modern Telegu language. Early in life, he espoused the cause of the unfortunate Hindu widows and laboured all the life for the amelioration of their lot. Unlike Vidyasagar, he succeeded in creating a strong party in favour of widow remarriage, and during his life-time many widow re-marriages were performed in the Telegu Country. When Pandit Sastri was working at Madras, one of Mr. Viresalingam's followers, Mr. Ramakrishnayya by name, a wealthy Vaisya merchant of Cocanada, came to know of him through the newspapers and earnestly requested him to pay a visit to Cocanada. Pandit Sastri was glad to accept his invitation. On his arrival at Cocanada, he was warmly received by Mr. Ramakrishnayya, who, however was surprised not to find any Brahmin cook with Pandit Sastri. Pandit Sastri told him that he was a poor Brahmo-missionary and had no caste scruples about food. Ramakrishnayya kept him in a house of his own and supplied food from his own kitchen. One day, while Pandit Sastri was discussing with some Brahmins on the question of widow remarriage, a Vaisya servant brought water for Pandit Sastri to bathe. The Brahmins were shocked at this and at once broke off the conversation. They put pressure on Ramakrishnayya to send away this atheistic Brahmin as they called him. Ramakrishnayya was in a dilemma; he had invited Pandit Sastri and could not, with any decency ask him to go away. When Pandit Sastri came to know of his embarrassment he voluntarily offered to go away from his house, but he could not find any other place at Cocanada. On account of his cropped hair and long beard, he was considered a Christian and no Hindu would give him shelter. On the other hand he could not go to a Christian Hotel as he

as he was a vegetarian. Under the circumstances he thought of going to Rajmundry where he hoped to find welcome from Mr. Veeresalingam. But he could not secure any conveyance immediately. The only cheap and suitable conveyance between Rajmundry and Cocanada in those days was boats which were available only twice in a week. Pandit Sastri decided to walk to Rajmundry—a distance of about 40 miles. Fortunately there was an educated Brahmo young man named Bhima Rao who had become attached to Pandit Sastri. Bhima Rao would not allow him to walk to Rajmundry and brought him to his own house against the wishes of Pandit Sastri defying the threats of the Brahmins. With the help of Bhima Rao a meeting was held in a local school over which the Magistrate presided. When Ramkrishnayya saw that the Magistrate and the European residents treated him with consideration he offered to Pandit Sastri a garden-house of his own for his stay. Pandit Sastri thanked him saying that he was leaving for Rajmundry the next day. Accordingly he left Cocanada by boat for Rajmundry, where he was the guest of Pandit Veeresalingam and was pleased with the hospitality of him and his wife. After working for a few days vigorously at Rajmundry, Pandit Sastri returned to Madras. His friends and admirers at Madras gave a farewell to him at a public meeting and presented him a watch. During this tour he also visited Coimbatore and Bangalore. At Coimbatore also the local members were anxious about his heterodox ways and cautioned him not to break the caste rules during his stay there. But one day Pandit Sastri took his breakfast in the house of a Panchama, who was an earnest member of the local Samaj and people came to know of it. After this he was invited to dinner by many Sudras but there were no untoward consequences as apprehended by the members of the local Samaj.

At Bangalore his visit awakened much enthusiasm. There was a Brahmo Samaj in the Cantonement which had been organised by Mr. Appabhu Pillai, a Subedar in one of the

native regiments. He had made over a house for the Brahmo Samaj where Pandit Sastri was put up and food was sent for him from the house of Gopalswami Iyer, a Brahmin young man, who acted as minister of the Samaj. Several meetings were held which were largely attended and on one occasion Mr. Rangacharlu, the Dewan of Mysore, presided.

Pandit Sastri returned to Calcutta in May but had to go to Madras again in September at the earnest request of Mr. Bucchayya Pantulu. Babu Amritalal Bose, one of the missionaries of the New Dispensation Church, had arrived at Madras in course of a mission tour and the friends of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, alarmed by the prospect of the work of Pandit Sastri being undone sent telegram after telegram requesting him to revisit Madras. Accordingly he returned to Madras in September. It was during this visit that Pandit Sastri wrote a booklet on *The New Dispensation and the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj*, which was published at Madras. While at Madras, Pandit Sastri was sorely grieved at the wretched condition of helpless low-caste orphan boys, who had been rendered homeless at the time of the famine a few years back. At the instance of Pandit Sastri the Madras Brahmo Samaj established a School for such helpless boys under the name *Sree Raja Rammohan Roy Ragged School*. It was subsequently raised to the Middle English Standard and is still in existence.

After an absence of three months, Pandit Sastri returned to Calcutta via Bombay where he also spent a fortnight. The next two years Pandit Sastri had to give greater attention to the work in Calcutta, building up new institutions and developing the old ones. He frequently preached at the Calcutta Congregation and delivered lectures in connection with the Students' Weekly Service. In the year 1883 the *Brahmo Public Opinion*, which had been started on the financial responsibility of private persons, was taken over as the official organ of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj and its name was changed into *Indian Messenger*. Pandit Sastri

was put in charge of it. The paper was at first printed in some private Press but it was more expensive and the paper could not be brought out in time. So Pandit Sastri suggested that the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj should have a Press of its own. But the Executive Committee of the Samaj did not agree to his proposal as they had suffered some loss in a similar venture previously. Accordingly Pandit Sastri started a Press on his own responsibility under the name '*Brahmo Mission Press*' borrowing the capital from some friends. He had to work very hard to make the Press successful. After some years, when the press had become a paying concern and the debts had been liquidated, he made it over to the Samaj. It was about this time that, with the help of a few ladies, Pandit Sastri started a *Sunday School* for the moral and religious education of children.

In the midst of his manifold activities in Calcutta, Pandit Sastri had to visit many places in Bengal at the earnest request of the local Brahmo Samajes; for example, among the places he visited in 1882, we find the names of Midnapore, Barisal, Darjeeling, Rangpur, Kakina, Siliguri, Saidpur, Gaya, Giridhi, Madhupur, Bankura, Bansberia, Chinsura, Kumarkhali and Faridpur.

In 1884 he could sufficiently disengage himself from his work in the head-quarters to be able to undertake long mission tours. Early in the year he started on a mission tour accompanied by Pandit Nawadwip Chandra Das, Babu Sasibhusan Bose and Babu Umapada Roy, in course of which, they visited Konnagar, Harinabhi, Burdwan, Azimganj, Murshidabad, Birbhum, Bankura, Nalhati, Bolepur, and Giridhi. At Giridhi Pandit Sibnarayan Agnihotri of Lahore joined him. Thus strengthened, the party proceeded on to Hazaribagh, Ghazipur and Benares. At Benares Pandit Agnihotri fell ill and had to return to Lahore. Pandit Sastri after visiting Gaya, Jamalpur and Monghyer returned to Calcutta about the middle of May. In October, he again started on a long mission tour, this time in Madras and

Bombay Presidencies. He first visited Madras where he stayed about a month. From Madras he went to Bangalore, Coimbatore, Bellary, Poona, Bombay and Ahmedabad. From Ahmedabad he again proceeded to Madras to consecrate the new Prayer Hall of the Samaj and he returned to Calcutta in January next to be in time for the anniversary celebrations.

In the year 1885 Pandit Sastri was elected President of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj for the first time and was mainly occupied with the work in Calcutta and Bengal.

In the year 1886, he went on a mission tour in Assam in course of which he visited Shillong, Dibrugarh, Sibsagar, Nowgong, Tejpur, Gauhati, Goalpara and Dhubri. He also visited Khulna, Harinabhi, Baranagar, Sinthia, Mymensingh, Dacca, Kaoraid, Bolepur, Kurseong, and Darjeeling. The next year also was spent in similar activities.

In the year 1888 Pandit Sastri went on a visit to England. His friend Durgamohan Das, who was going to England suggested that Pandit Sastri might accompany him and offered to pay the steamer fare. Some other friends, when they heard of the proposal, voluntarily offered financial help. Accordingly Pandit Sastri started for England in the company of Babu Durga Mohan Das and another friend Babu Parbati Charan Roy by *S. S. Mirjapur*. They arrived in London on the 19th May. At the suggestion of Miss S. D. Collet, a sincere friend and well-wisher of the Brahmo Samaj, Pandit Sastri took lodgings in a middle-class English family in the North of London, so that he might be near Miss Collet.

Altogether he was six months in England ; but he utilised the time to the best advantage. The effect of his six months' stay was to be found throughout his life. With his wonderful powers of observation and profound insight into human nature he studied the British national character very thoroughly during the comparatively short period of his stay and understood its defects and excellences most accurately. Though not blind to the short-comings of the

British Nation he remained a warm admirer of their national character to the end of his days.

He was particularly impressed with the excellences of the British middle-class home—its quiet, its regularity, its harmony of intellectual, social and philanthropic activities. He noticed with great admiration the honesty, sense of duty, responsibility, and punctuality of the British working-class people. But he was deeply grieved and disgusted at the excess of intemperance in England.

The main object of his visit to England was self-improvement. But he could do some valuable work during his short stay. He preached frequently in the Unitarian and other liberal Religious Assemblies at different places. In co-operation with his friend Babu Durgamohan Das he had the tomb of Raja Ram Mohun Roy at Arno's Vale in Bristol repaired. On the 27th of September, the anniversary of the death of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, he went to Bristol and spent the whole day at the Raja's tomb, and in the evening he addressed a Public meeting at Bristol. On this occasion, he met an English lady whose father was an intimate friend of Raja Ram Mohan Roy and who presented to him a bust and turban of the Rajah, which Pandit Sastri afterwards, made over to the Bengalee Academy. It was during his stay in England that he began to write the History of the Brahmo Samaj at the suggestion of Miss Collet for the well-known publisher *Trubner & Co.* But the firm, having given up the idea of publishing the book, the work was discontinued for the time, and years afterwards it was completed and published in India. Pandit Sastri visited many important public Institutions such as Bernardoos Home, George Muller's Orphanage, Toynby Hall, Peoples' Palace, Polytechnics for working classes, and was deeply impressed with the volume and excellences of Englands' philanthropic activities. He came into contact with many noble-hearted English men and women and made some permanent friends, chief among whom were Miss S. D. Collet,

Rev. Charles Voysey, W. T. Stead, Dr. James Martineau and Rev. Stopford Brooke.

On his way back to India he met George Muller at Colombo, who was then returning from a tour in the East and was deeply impressed by his prayerfulness. Pandit Sastri was in his company only for a few minutes but such was the receptivity of his rich nature that it left an abiding impression on his mind and character.

CHAPTER IV.

HARVEST OF RIPE YEARS.

Leadon with the rich harvest of six months' stay in England and filled with many ideas and projects for the good of his own country, Pandit Sastri returned to India in Nov. 1888. One of the first fruits of the visit was the establishment of an English congregation in the European quarters of Calcutta. The chief organiser was one Mr. Blaker, who had been a member of Rev. Charles Voysey's Thiestic Church of London. At this time he was employed in Calcutta and requested Pandit Sastri to start an English service for the benefit of those who did not know Bengali. Pandit Sastri readily agreed and Mr. Blaker engaged the Hall of Dalhousie Institute where Pandit Sastri conducted divine service on Sunday morning. The experiment continued for some years but the attendance of the European and Eurasian population was never very large and the purpose for which it was started was not fulfilled. After a few years when Mr. Blaker left India it was closed.

Another fruit of the English visit which had a greater success was the starting of the Brahmo Girls' School. During his stay in England Pandit Sastri had opportunities of seeing some Kindergarden Institutions. Pandit Sastri was keenly interested in the education of children. He had been a teacher himself. On his return to India he conceived the idea of opening a Kindergarden School for Brahmo Children. Accordingly he started a small Kindergarden School with a few ladies and gentlemen as teachers. He himself used to give instruction to the children of the lowest class.

Pandit Sastri had to work very hard for this institution. At the beginning he was responsible for the entire manage-

ment including finance. But with the development of the school others had to be associated in the work of the management and though it developed into a flourishing institution, the original ideal has been lost sight of and contrary to the wishes of Pandit Sastri it has become an ordinary boarding school affiliated to the Calcutta University.

Along with the new enterprises, Pandit Sastri had to engage himself in the usual old activities. On his return to Calcutta he resumed the work of the Calcutta congregation, the Students' Weekly Service and the other institutions of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj. He edited the *Tatwakaumudi* and frequently wrote for the Indian Messenger. These engagements did not permit any long absence from Calcutta but still he visited many Brahmo Samajes in Bengal such as Midnapur, Bankura, Kidderpur, Konnagar, Daghara, Kushtea, Diamond Harbour, Dacca, and Barahanagar. During the last quarter of the year, he proceeded on a long mission tour in the Punjab, N. W. Provinces, Central India and Central Provinces and Bombay visiting Lahore, Benares, Lucknow, Allhabad, Jubbalpur, Khandwa, Indore, Ujjain, Rutlam, and Ahmedabad. From Ahmedabad he proceeded to Bombay to take part in the Thiestic Conference of which he was the Secretary.

The next year also was spent in similar activities. At the request of the Executive Committee, he now spent the first nine months of the year in Calcutta and went on long Mission Tours in the last quarter of the year. During his stay in Calcutta he conducted Divine Service almost every week; he also conducted Divine Service in English and visited the following places in Bengal:—Barisal, Uluberia, Bansberia, Bankura and Kustea. Early in October he started for Madras. During this tour he visited Trichnopoly, Bezwada and Cocanada. At Cocanada he fell seriously ill and for sometime his life was despaired of. There were no Brahmos at Cocanada and he had to suffer great hardships. On the receipt of the news of his illness, his wife, daughter

and Babu Sasibhusan Bose, Assistant Secretary of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj accompanied by a Doctor Babu Bipinbehari Sarkar, who subsequently became his son-in-law went to Coconada to nurse him. After six weeks of struggle between life and death he recovered sufficiently to be in a position to be brought back to Calcutta. The party left Cocanada on the 26th December by steamer.

By the time of the next Maghotsav Pandit Sastri sufficiently recovered to be able to take part in its proceedings and to resume his usual activities. Thus he worked strenuously year in and year out. Twelve years have rolled by since the foundation of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj. The infant organisation inaugurated in the stormy days of the Cooch Behar marriage controversy with so much fear and anxiety was now a well-established Church with many affiliated institutions in and out of Calcutta. It had a well-defined constitution with its missionary body, office-bearers, various committees, all working smoothly. But Pandit Sastri was not quite satisfied with all these. There was an unrest in his mind which gradually deepened till by the middle of 1891 a settled gloom and depression overtook him. His health was affected and his temper irritated. He did not find any enthusiasm and interest in any work. In this state of mind, towards the end of the year, he removed himself to a quiet place in the suburb of Calcutta where he lived in comparative retirement. Here he would spend many hours a day in prayer and meditation in the solitude of a garden. Gradually light came to him; he felt the need of a compact body of devout workers who would devote themselves to the service of the Brahmo Samaj in complete dependence on the mercy of God. The idea slowly took shape in his mind and by the time of the next Maghotsav he was fairly resolved to carry out the idea which he felt to be the inspiration from God. Accordingly on the first of February 1892, the day following his forty-fifth birthday, he inaugurated the institution with divine service in the 'company of a few friends in a room

of the City School at 45 Beniatola Lane. This was the beginning of the Sadhanashram. As yet there was no plan of work or no ray of hope. He had communicated the idea to a few intimate friends including the late Mr. A. M. Bose who warmly approved of it. He had not a single pie to finance the new institution. It was started in absolute dependence on the mercy of Providence. A leaflet embodying the ideal of the institution was circulated after the inaugural service. Among those present on the occasion was Babu Gurudas Chakravarty a teacher of the Mymensingh branch of the city school who had come to Calcutta on leave. He was at once attracted by the idea and desired to join the proposed institution. Pandit Sastri asked him to take time and think over the matter carefully. Gurudas Babu returned to Mymensingh for the time being but his determination to join the proposed institution grew stronger. He had some debts. Pandit Sastri sent the money to pay them off and asked him to come to Calcutta. A small house was rented in where Babu Gurudas Chakravarty lived with his family. After some time another Brahmo gentleman, Babu Kasi Chandra Ghoshal joined the new institution which was named the *Brahmo Sadhanashram* or the Brahmo Workers Shelter. One by one many others joined the Sadhanashram. Its expenses were met by the voluntary donations of Brahmo friends. In course of time the Sadhanashram grew to be one of the most important institutions of the Brahmo Samaj.

Pandit Sastri during his eventful career founded many institutions but the most important of these was the Sadhanashram. He himself looked upon it as the greatest work of his life. He prayed and thought and laboured for it incessantly. At the outset the foundation of the Sadhanashram brought him into acute conflict with many of his friends including Ananda Mohan Bose and Umesh Chandra Dutta two of his most intimate colleagues in the work of the Brahmo Samaj. They misunderstood him and thought that he was going to start a rival institution. For a time there was a hot controversy ;

but in course of time the honesty of Pandit Sastri's purpose and his sincere desire to advance the cause of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj was understood by all and the Sadhanashram was affiliated as a constituent institution of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj. During the Maghotsav of 1893 a day was set apart for the Utsav of the Sadhanashram. The venerable Maharshi Dovendranath Tagore was invited to take part in the Utsav. Maharshi came from his invalid bed and conducted the service in brief and blessed the new institution and its workers. Pandit Sastri preached a stirring sermon and invited contributions for the new Institution. Immediately gifts in cash and kind poured in from all sides. Women gave their ornaments and jewellery. It was a unique day in the history of the Brahmo Samaj. The money and gifts received on that day were utilised in building a wooden structure for the Prayer Hall of the Sadhanashram, which after removal from place to place in rented houses, was located in the Mission House of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj. The hopes of Pandit Sastri in founding the Sadhanashram were largely realised. Through this channel, many new workers were drawn to the service of the Brahmo Samaj. Pandit Sastri continued to be in charge of it till the year 1912, when failing health compelled him to retire from the active service of the Brahmo Samaj.

In course of time many workers joined the Sadhanashram and its activities expanded in many directions. One of the earliest institutions started and worked by the workers of Sadhanashram was the Brahmo Boys' Hostel opened in 1893 of which Pandit Sastri had to be the Secretary and Babu Gurudas Chakravorty was appointed the Superintendent. The institution did not prove a success and after a few years it had to be abolished leaving a legacy of a debt of about Rs 500 which Pandit Sastri had to pay off from his slender and precarious income. In 1894 a branch of the Sadhanashram was opened at Arah in Behar with Bhai Prakash Dev, a worker from the Punjab as its Superinten-

dent. Pandit Sastri Paid several visits to Arah and Bankipore where the branch Ashram was subsequently removed.

Another important undertaking of this period was the acceptance of the office of the whole-time and responsible minister of the Calcutta congregation of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj. The Calcutta Congregation, which was the most important congregation of the Brahmo Samaj was formed on the model of the Christian Congregations of the West was not a compact and efficient institution that it was meant to be. The work of ministration was entrusted to a number of persons ; no single person was responsible for its spiritual welfare. Perhaps the unfortunate state of things in the Brahmo Samaj of India with Babu Kesav Chandra Sen as its sole minister was responsible for it. Anyhow without a responsible minister the Congregation did not grow and thrive as it was expected. In July 1893, Pandit Sastri wrote a letter to the Executive Committee of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj drawing attention to the undesirable condition of the Calcutta Congregation urging the adoption of immediate steps for its remedy. A Committee was formed which after prolonged deliberation submitted a report suggesting certain reforms, the most important of which was the appointment of a whole time responsible minister. Accordingly in 1894 Pandit Sastri was requested to accept the office of the whole-time minister of the Calcutta Congregation of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj which he did. A house was rented in the neighbourhood of the Prayer Hall where Pandit Sastri took his residence and had his office. A Library and Reading room was opened for the use of the members of the Congregation and other facilities were afforded for visitors to meet the minister. The idea was that of Dr. P. K. Roy an old and influential member of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj who was then a professor in the Presidency College. At least he laboured earnestly to work out the scheme which attained considerable success at the beginning. It afforded an excellent oppor-

tunity for developing Pandit Sastri's latent powers as a preacher.

Pandit Sastri was undoubtedly a man of great talents. He had undertaken and achieved many important works in his life but perhaps he was at his best in the work of preaching. He was a born preacher. From the days of the Sinduriapati. Brahmo Samaj people appreciated his abilities as a preacher and he was in great demand in the work of spiritual ministrations. But the vicissitudes of the Brahmo Samaj and the manifold calls on his time and attention did not allow Pandit Sastri to concentrate upon and develop his most prominent inborn talent viz. that of preaching. It was unfortunate for Pandit Sastri's career as much as for the country that he had always too many irons in the fire. The result was that though he rendered valuable services for his country and the Brahmo Samaj and achieved considerable success in many directions he did not attain the highest place in any which he could have reached had he given undivided attention to it. However that he was a great preacher and has left valuable permanent contributions for the religious literature of the country and for this we are indebted to the new scheme of the Calcutta congregation. As a responsible minister of the congregation he was required to preach a sermon, preferably a written one, week after week, which fortunately for us, have been preserved in the form of books. The six volumes of his sermons, which were published with the title *Dharmajivan* or spiritual life, deserved to be placed by the side of the best literature of this kind in any language. For depth of thought, elegance of style, simplicity of expression, importance of subject matter, they stand very high in the Bengali language. Pandit Sastri was a most fertile and original preacher. For well-nigh forty years he was in constant demand as a preacher and had often to speak several times a day but he seldom repeated himself. It is a great pity that his sermons have not been preserved with the exception of the six volumes of *Dharmajivan*. Pandit Sastri

was most effective as an extempore preacher. From the printed sermons which were mostly preached from written *manuscripts*, the excellence of his pulpit oratory cannot be fully appreciated. However they are a valuable contribution to the literature of Brahmo Samaj and of the country. His sermons on the anniversary day of the Brahmo Samaj were superb pieces of oratory, which used to move the congregation to a high pitch of enthusiasm. Some of his sermons preached in the daily service of the Sadhanashram were likewise characterised by a profound spiritual depth and earnest enthusiasm. But unfortunately they have not been preserved and of the large mass of his sermons, the six volumes of Dharmajiban and a small collection of his Anniversary sermons are all that are available for posterity.

The few years of compulsory stationary life owing to the acceptance of the office of the minister of the Calcutta Congregation was productive of another great good. It afforded him time for arranging and completing his literary work. Next to the service of the Brahmo Samaj, literary work was nearest to the heart of Pandit Sastri. But the exigencies of nomadic life of an active missionary did not afford him the quiet and leisure for developing his literary projects. We have already seen that the distractions of the work of the Brahmo Samaj did not permit his rising to the full height of his poetical genius. But even amid the tumultuous activities of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj he rendered some valuable services to the Bengalee Prose literature. From time to time he contributed several valuable articles to various Bengali Magazines. These were marked by profundity of thought, loftiness of sentiment and beauty of expression, which made them of abiding interest. During the comparative quiet of this period, Pandit Sastri revised and reprinted them in the form of a book under the name *Prabandhavalī* or the essays, which has become a permanent asset of the Bengali literature. During this period he wrote and published two more Bengali novels viz., the *Yugantar*

and the *Nayantar* both of which depict the change in the Bengali society consequent upon the introduction of English Education and the influence of Western culture on it. Pandit Sastri has written a few other novels which entitled him to a permanent place among Bengali Novelists. His novels are characterised by a high moral tone and good taste, while affording pure joy and noble instruction. They have become deservedly popular and some have passed through several editions and are likely to be of permanent value.

Another interesting and important contribution of Pandit Sivanath Sastri to the Bengali literature which was also completed at this period was the Book *Ramtanu Lahiri and the Bengali Society of his time*. It is the biography of the saintly Brahmo teacher of Krishnagar, but along with it Pandit Sastri has narrated a most interesting history of Bengal, Political, Social and Intellectual, during the latter half of the 19th Century. He had collected the materials in the course of his extensive studies through many years. Shortly after the death of Ramtanu Lahiri his son, the late Babu Saratkumar Lahiri, who had built up a very publishing firm, requested him to write a biography of his father. Pandit Sastri thought he could very well utilise the materials he had collected and gladly accepted the offer. Pandit Sastri had a great veneration to Ramtanu Lahiri and his vast intimate knowledge of the period covered by long life have made the book a most valuable contribution to the Bengali historical literature.

Pandit Sastri is one of the finest writers of the Bengali Prose. He had a simple sweet and inimitable style. It is a pity that he did not write more. But the extent of his writings in Bengali is not small. Besides the books already mentioned he wrote *Pushpanjali*—a collection of poems, *Himadrikusum*, *Chayamayee Parinaya*.

Pandit Sastri was also the master of an elegant prose in English. The majority of his English writings were

contributed to the columns of the *Indian Messenger*, the weekly organ of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, some which are reprinted in the sequel. His most important book in English is the history of the Brahmo Samaj in two volumes which was commenced in England at the suggestion of Miss S. D. Collet and was completed about this period. He has also written a small volume on the mission of the Brahmo Samaj. He contributed a number of articles under the heading "Men I have seen" to the *Modern Review*—a series of interesting impressions of notable persons such as Ramkrishna Paramahansa, Iswarchandra Vidyasagar etc. These have been reprinted in the form of a book.

During the years Pandit Sastri was the responsible Minister of the Calcutta Congregation, his activities as an itinary missionary in mofussils had necessarily to be curtailed, but still he could not devote himself entirely to the work in Calcutta. At the request of the Executive Committee of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj he had to devote himself to the work in the mofussils during the three winter months. In 1893 he, accompanied by Bhai Prakash Dev and Bhai Sunder Singh, went on a long mission tour in Northern India in course of which he visited Deoghar, Bankipur, Benares, Fyzabad, Lucknow, Hardwar, Lahore, Delhi, Agra, Jhansi, Indore and Allahabad. In 1894 he was mostly in Calcutta where besides the absorbing work of the Sadhanasram he had to attend to duties of the minister of the Calcutta Congregation. It was unfortunate that these two important institutions had to be looked after at the one and the same time. The result was that both of them suffered. The work of the Sadhanasram alone required his entire time and attention and the re-organisers of the Calcutta Congregation expected that Pandit Sastri would give his undivided attention to the new duties. But he could not disengage himself from the work of the Sadhanasram. At the same time he could not give as much attention to it as an infant institution of this nature would

require to make it a success. On the other hand the Executive Committee of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj desired that he would give at least some time to mission work in the other provinces for which he was the only available person. Besides he had all along to write for the Indian Messenger and the Tatwakaumudi, he being the editor of the latter. These manifold duties were too much even for a wonderful worker like Pandit Sastri. With his marvellous industry and endurance Pandit Sastri endeavoured to carry on all these duties at one and the same time. But naturally he failed to do justice to any. In 1894 he could not go out of Calcutta except for a short visit to Bankipore and Arrah, where he spent a few days in the company of the workers of the Branch Sadhanasram.

In 1895 too Pandit Sastri was mostly in Calcutta but he could snatch some time to visit Lahore, Khandwa, Allahabad, Arrah and Monghyr. In 1896 he spent the two months of October and November in mission work outside Calcutta and he visited Arrah, Bankipore, Brahmo-gram, Allahabad, Jubbulpore, Hossangabad and Khandwa accompanied by Babus Kunjulal Ghosh and Roy Chandra Chaudury. The Branch Sadhanasram at Arrah was removed to Bankipore in July 1896, the chief town of Behar. It was proposed to start a high school here under the management of the Sadhanasram. Babu Sriranga Behari Lal, a young Behari Brahmo, offered considerable financial help. Accordingly a High School under the name *Rammohun Ray seminary* was started at Bankipore with Babu Gurudas Chakravarti as its Secretary. Two Masters of Arts of the Calcutta University, viz, Babu Hemchandra Sarkar and Babu Satis Chandra Chakravarti had joined the Sahanasram shortly before and they were all sent to Bankipore to work as teachers of the new school. Pandit Sastri was the leading spirit behind the new venture. Under his inspiration the workers laboured with great enthusiasm amid most discouraging circumstances and the school made a rapid progress. The Bankipore Sadha-

nasram also worked very efficiently. Pandit Sastri used to go very frequently to Bankipore on short visits to encourage the workers.

During the year 1897, the mind of Pandit Sastri was much exercised over the present condition and the future prospects of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj. Nearly twenty years rolled by since the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj had been founded and Pandit Sastri was intimately connected with its working ever since. He was the President of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj this year as he had been more than once before. But now he realised some grave defects in the constitution for the framing of which he was largely responsible, and felt it his duty to get it amended. Accordingly he suggested certain changes in the constitution. He read a very thoughtful paper on the question at a Conference of members of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj and it was discussed at several sittings held in succession. But there was a strong opposition to the proposals of Pandit Sastri and though he felt strongly on the question, he had no other course left but to drop the matter. To his last day Pandit Sastri believed that certain changes were necessary in the constitution of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj for its better working, but he felt he had not strength enough for the struggles necessary to carry out the reform. Under the circumstances however he thought that he could no longer remain the President of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj and in August 1897 he resigned that office.

Pandit Sastri continued to work to the best of his abilities for the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj as long as health and strength permitted. During the winter of the same year he went on a long mission tour extending as far as Quetta in Beluchistan which lasted for nearly three months. Starting from Calcutta he first halted at Bankipore where, besides conducting Divine services and holding conversational meetings with the workers of the Sadhanasram, he delivered several public addresses. His next halt was at Allahabad where also he held some public meetings. From Allahabad he hurried on to

Quetta halting at Lahore for a little rest. At Quetta he conducted the anniversary of the local Brahmo Samaj. On his way back he visited several stations in Sind including Sukkur, Shikarpur, Karachi, Kotri and Hyderabad. Returning to Lahore towards the end of November he took part in the anniversary of the Punjab Brahmo Samaj. On his way back to Calcutta he again halted at Bankipore spending a few days in the company of the workers of the Sadhanasram.

Next year Pandit Sastri desired to spend in retirement and though the Executive Committee of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj agreed to the proposal, he could not be relieved of the duties of the several institutions such as the Sadhanasram, the Calcutta Congregation, The Tatwakaumudi and the Indian Messenger with which he was intimately associated. But now he longed for rest and quiet when he could review in solitude the work of the past years which were spent in breathless activities. But he could not be altogether relieved of the duties which had been entrusted to him. In 1899 he removed to Chandernagore with his family from where he used to come to Calcutta at the week-end to conduct Divine Service on Sundays and to attend on other urgent matters. He also visited the following places during the year : Bankipore, Dhubri, Darjeeling, Gauhati, Jalpaiguri, Siliguri, Shillong, Saidpore, and Tindharia.

The arduous labours of the last twenty years affected the iron constitution of even Sastri. He felt that his physical and mental strength was rapidly declining and he was anxious to complete the works he had undertaken. One of these was the history of the Brahmo Samaj which he had commenced to write during his visit to England at the suggestion of Miss S. D. Collet. In the comparative quiet of Chandernagore he resumed that work, but his health was failing, and in 1900 he was compelled to take leave during the two summer months of May and June and again in September a part of which period was spent in Darjeeling.

CHAPTER V

LAST DAYS

Towards the end of 1900 Pandit Sastri removed to Calcutta, where his family stayed in the Mission-house. In 1901 he was again elected President of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj and tried to strengthen its missionary activities. He called a conference of all missionaries and mission workers and submitted a scheme for the association of the mofussil Samajes with the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, which was adopted, but unfortunately a difference between himself and the Executive Committee broke up on the question of the position of the President and he felt it his duty to resign that office.

On the 22nd of May 1901 he started on a mission tour in Assam but he had to return from Silchar on receipt of the news of the illness of his wife, Prasannamoyee Devi. She had been suffering for many years from Diabetes, but she did not mind it and went on with her household duties without caring for her health. On May of this year she had a carbuncle on her hand and the noble lady passed away on the third of June 1901. She was the angel of Pandit Sastri's household attending to the comforts of every one except herself. It was owing to her efficiency in household management that Pandit Sastri could devote himself to the work of the Samaj undistracted by domestic worries which she took upon herself. It was by her wisdom and economy that Pandit Sastri's home became an ideal Brahmo home. Before her death, she not only saw all her own children of whom there were three daughters and one son well-established in life, but even the many helpless girls whom she had given shelter well-provided. Before the end of the year Pandit Sastri himself was attacked with

Diabetes and he compelled to go for a change in November leaving behind all work and worry. He spent several months at Khandwa in the central Provinces and could not take part in the anniversary celebration of 1902. This was the first occasion, since the foundation of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, that Pandit Sastri could not take part in the *Maghotsav* and his absence was keenly felt. He returned to Calcutta in February not much improved in health, and was not in a position to resume all his activities. He took a house in Ballygunge where he lived in partial retirement coming to Calcutta only on Thursdays to conduct the morning service of the Sadhanasram.

By the middle of 1902 he had sufficiently recovered his health to be able to conduct the evening services in the Prayer Hall, but he was not yet in such a state of health as to undertake any sustained work.

Indeed his health was now rapidly declining and it was apparent that he must now retire from all active work. Though he could take part in the anniversary proceedings next year in 1903, he was compelled to resign the office of the responsible minister of the Calcutta Congregation towards the end of the year. From this time he had to spend the summer months in some Hill Station. This year he was at Darjeeling, where he conducted Divine service in the local Brahmo Samaj and held conversational meetings at Lewis Jubilee Sanatorium.

For the last several years he could not go on a mission tour owing to failing health. Now he was anxious to see once more the Samajes which he had visited so often. Pandit Sastri was the only missionary of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, who was in touch with all the Brahmo and Prarthana Samajes of the different provinces. Almost from the beginning he repeatedly visited these Samajes and thus succeeded in winning their sympathy and fastening them to the organisation of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj. But ever since 1897, he could

not undertake any long mission tour on account of his health. In the beginning of 1904, however, he resolved to go on a tour round the country in spite of his failing health. Accordingly soon after the Maghotsav he started from Calcutta accompanied by his wife Birajmohini Devi and Babu Hemendranath Dutta, a young associate of the Sadhanasram.

Pandit Sastri decided not to ask anyone for the expenses of this mission tour, which, in the present state of his health were bound to be heavy. Before starting from Calcutta he called a meeting of Brahmos and sympathisers in the Prayer Hall and delivered an address on mission work intimating his desire to go on an All-India mission tour and suggesting that friends who wished to contribute any thing towards the expenses of this tour, might put in their mite into the bag which was hung in the Mandir. The collections made on that day amounted to Rs. 80. With this the party left Calcutta on the 9th February and went round the greater part of the country returning to Calcutta on 25th June.

Their first halt was at Bankipore. The week was spent in strenuous activities. Pandit Sastri conducted divine service, delivered public lectures, gave interviews, and held conferences. His visit greatly strengthened the local Brahmos and awakened interest among the outsiders. From Bankipore, he proceeded to Allahabad, where he halted for five days, which was spent in arduous labours so much so his friends became anxious about his health. Babu Hemendranath Dutta, who accompanied him, during this tour, in a letter to a friend in Calcutta, wrote "Pandit Sastri is working so hard that I am very anxious about his health. For the love of work he quite forgets the broken condition of his health. Sometimes from morning till late hours at night he scarcely allows himself a short rest. He proceeded on from Allahabad to Cawnpur, from Cawnpur to Lucknow from Lucknow to Agra, Delhi, Dehra Dun Saharanpur, reaching Lahore on the 19th March. He stayed at Lahore for about 10 days, which was spent in incessant activities. From



Jayanth Sastri and his second wife

Lahore he paid a visit to Rawalpindi and finally left Punjab for Indore on the 1st of April.

From Lahore Pandit Sastri proceeded to Indore where he stayed for five days and took part in the anniversary celebration of the Central India Brahmo Samaj. The party next halted at Mangalore where they arrived on the 14th of May. Pandit Sastri intended to stay here for a week, but at the earnest request of the members of the local Samaj his stay was prolonged to more than a fortnight. Here he worked strenuously and besides giving several public addresses, conducting divine service in the Samaj and in families, he thoroughly reorganised the Samaj, drafting its Trust Deed and framing rules for the management. His services were much appreciated and the members presented him with an address on the eve of his departure. Enumerating his services to the local Samaj, the Address said : 'You have restored order in the management of the affairs of our Samaj, given it a constitution and placed it on a firmer basis than ever it had been before. You have inspired it with new life and hope. You have opened before it new paths of useful work and progress. We cannot adequately express in words our sincere gratitude to you for all that you have done for us. But we content ourselves by assuring you that our little hearts feel your services very deeply and warmly.'

From Mangalore he proceeded to Calicut where also he stayed for about a week and greatly strengthened the little Samaj by his ministration and counsel. His next halt was at Coimbatore, which he had visited several times in his earlier tours. From Coimbatore he arrived at Bangalore on the 13th May and stayed there for about a fortnight. He delivered several addresses at the Cantonment Station and the Bangalore City, besides conducting divine services and holding conversational meetings. From Bangalore he proceeded to Madras arriving there on the 26th May. As usual a heavy programme of work was arranged, but while at Madras he had an attack of influenza compelling him to

give up some of his engagements. From Madras he intended to proceed to Northern Circars but on account of failing health he gave up that idea. Leaving Madras on the 7th June he arrived in Bombay on the 9th. Here, too, his visit awakened much enthusiasm. The members of the Samaj took full advantage of his visit. Every morning Pandit Sastri conducted divine service at the Ram Mohun Ashram where he was put up, after which he would meet visitors and inquirers. Two young men were initiated into Brahmoism and a branch of the Sadhanasram was started. He left Bombay on the 21st and returned to Calcutta on the 25th halting at Nagpur for two days. At Nagpur he conducted divine service and delivered an address. This was the last and longest of the many mission tours, which Pandit Sastri undertook during the many years of his active service to the Brahmo Samaj. It was a matter of sincere thankfulness that at this age and with his shattered health he could go round the country visiting so many distant places. His friends and admirers in Calcutta were very happy to receive him back in their midst and several of them met him at the Howrah Station. Two meetings were held to welcome him, one in the Albert Hall organised by the Calcutta Congregation, in which Pandit Sastri read a thoughtful paper on the present condition of the Brahmo Samaj and the other in the City College Hall organised by the members of the Students' Weekly Service.

On his return to Calcutta Pandit Sastri resumed his ordinary work at the invitation of some friends. He went to Simla in September and stayed there for two months. Here he held weekly divine service in the house of a friend and held conversational meetings besides occasionally delivering public lectures. Shortly after his return to Calcutta by the middle of November, his youngest daughter died rather suddenly, which melancholy event gave him a great shock.

During the next year he had to spend considerable part of his time at Darjeeling for the benefit of his health which was

now rapidly declining. He was naturally anxious to complete his unfinished literary works, the chief among which was the History of the Brahmo Samaj. He devoted all his spare time to it but with his broken health he could not make much headway, and it was not till 1911 and 1912 that the two volumes of the History of the Brahmo Samaj could be brought out.

In December of this year he went to Benares in connection with the Theistic Conference over which he was elected to preside. His Presidential Address was a masterly analysis of the existing religious conditions in India and a clear exposition of the spirit and principles of the Brahmo Samaj, which, he declared, was destined to be the religion of new India. He also enumerated some of the causes of the unpopularity of the Brahmo Samaj and its slow progress. Emphasising both the national and universal aspects of Brahmoism, he pleaded for a vigorous missionary activity in the Brahmo Samaj. It was printed in a pamphlet form and was subsequently republished by the British and Foreign Unitarian Association of London under the name, *Theism in India*, as one of its pamphlets for wide circulation.

In 1906 Pandit Sastri was again elected President of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj but on account of his health, he had to spend a considerable part of the year outside Calcutta, first at Darjeeling and again at Bhubaneswar near Cuttack. The All-India Theistic conference was held in Calcutta this year and was a unique success. Mr. (now Sir) R. Venkataratnam of Madras was the President and H. H. the Maharajah of Mayurbhunge was the Chairman of the Reception Committee. Pandit Sastri conducted Divine Service and preached at the Conference a Sermon, which was an eloquent, inspiring and authoritative pronouncement, the subject being, *Theism an Universal Religion*. He also read a very thoughtful paper on, *Is the Brahmo Samaj losing its hold on the minds of our educated countrymen? If so why?* An interesting discussion followed in which, among others, Sir Narayan

Chandavarkar, Dr. P. K. Ray, Mr. A. K. Donald, a Judge of the Bombay Small Cause Court and Prof. Ruchi Ram Sahni of Lahore, took part.

Next year Pandit Sastri was re-elected President of the Sadharan Brahma Samaj. In March, he went to Cocanada to Preside over the Andhra Theistic Conference. Theistic movement was gaining ground in the Andhra country about this time and the annual gathering of Theists was held at different places.

Ever since his illness at Cocanada Pandit Sastri did not visit this part of the country and he gladly accepted the invitation of the organisers of the Cocanada conference in spite of his ill health. Altogether he spent a fortnight in the Northern Circars in the course of which he visited Rajmundry also. Shortly after his return, he proceeded to Gayabari, a small Hill Station on the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway, for the benefit of his health. He spent about two months at Gayabari and Darjeeling. He had to return to Calcutta on receipt of the news of his father's illness and went to his native village, Magilpur, to see him. Here he must have contracted Malaria, as in a day or two after his return, he got high fever accompanied by delirium. The illness lasted for several months in course of which there were more than one occasion of grave anxiety. He had to be removed from his residence at Padmapukur to the house of Mrs. M. M. Bose in Upper Circular Road, for the convenience of medical attendance and nursing. The best medical aid available was secured and friends did all that was possible for his nursing. After hovering long between life and death, he was pronounced out of danger, but it was not till October that he completely recovered. A Thanks-giving Service was held on his recovery on the 18th October and on the 20th he proceeded to Cuttack on medical advice for a change. He had sufficiently regained his strength to be able to take part in the Maghotsav of the next year. On the 31st January 1908, his 61st birthday, a social gathering was organised

by the Students' Weekly Service and Sunday Moral Training School and an address with two purses was presented to him. Several speakers including Dr. P. K. Ray, Bhai Prakash Dev, Sir K. G. Gupta, Prof. Benoyendra Nath Sen, Babu Abinash Chandra Mazumdar and Mr. A. C. Sen spoke of the value of Pandit Sastri's life to the Brahmo Samaj.

Though last year's long illness had enfeebled his constitution, Pandit Sastri continued to conduct the usual weekly Divine Service in the Sadhanshram on Thursday mornings, and also occasionally in the Prayer Hall. In December, he could pay a visit to take part in the anniversary of the East Bengal Brahmo Samaj. His presence awakened great enthusiasm in the town and large congregations assembled to hear him. In spite of his enfeebled constitution, Pandit Sastri exerted himself very much and spoke on several occasions. He delivered a lecture on *Social Reconstruction in New India*, lasting for two hours, which kept his audience spell-bound. It was said that such a speech was not heard at Dacca for a long time past. From Dacca Pandit Sastri went to Mymensingh, where also he went through a strenuous programme of work. Arriving at Mymensingh on the morning of the 11th December, he conducted Divine Service in the local *Brahma Mandir*. During the mid-day there was a Ladies gathering after which Pandit Sastri visited the Mymensingh branch of the City School and went through the classes. From the City School he went to the Brahma Mandir, where a gathering of Brahmo ladies and gentlemen was held to present an address of welcome to him. After the ceremony he went to the Town Hall and delivered a lecture on '*Self-help, Individual and National*' at a crowded public meeting. That very evening he started for Narayangunge arriving there next morning. Immediately after his arrival a special Divine Service was held in the local Mandir. After break-fast Pandit Sastri talked with ladies who gathered there to hear him and left for Calcutta by *Mail Steamer*.

In the Maghotsav of 1909, Pandit Sastri took a leading part. Besides conducting the morning Service on the principal day of the Utsav, the 11th of Magh, and the Opening Service on the 1st Magh, he officiated as minister in the Utsav of the Sadhanasram on the 12th Magh and on the Ladies' Utsav on the 9th Magh. He also delivered a lecture in English on *the National and the Universal in Religion* on the 13th Magh and conducted Divine Service in English on the morning of 14th Magh.

In March he began to deliver a course of weekly discourses to the students of the City College. But this had to be interrupted, as early in April at the approach of the hot season, he had to proceed to Darjeeling where he made a prolonged stay and frequently conducted service in the local *Mandir*. It was during his stay at Darjeeling that in response to the questions of some inquirers, he wrote out his treatise on *the Mission of the Brahmo Samaj*. Towards the end of the year he paid a short visit to Dacca and Mymensingh.

In 1910 also Pandit Sastri took a large share in the Maghotsav. Besides conducting Divine Service on the principal day and the opening day of the Utsav, the Sadhanasram Utsav and the Ladies' Utsav, this year he delivered two lectures on the 6th and 8th Magh on *Maharshi Devendranath and Brahmananda Keshub Chandra Sen*. This was meant to be his mature and authoritative statement on the contribution of the two leaders to the Brahmo Samaj. Early in summer he proceeded to Kurseong where he stayed for about four months. In December 1910, the Annual Theistic Conference was held at Allahabad and Pandit Sastri was called upon to preside over it at a short notice. In spite of growing age and failing health, Pandit Sastri continued to work strenuously in connection with the various institutions of the Brahmo Samaj. The long-delayed History of the Brahmo Samaj was completed, and the first volume was published in May 1911 and the second Volume in February

1912. Pandit Sastri had worked for it, off and on, ever since 1888, and by his scrupulous and arduous labours accumulated vast information on the History of the Brahmo Samaj. His two volumes are not only a monument of his scrupulous labours, but remain standard and authoritative account of the Brahmo Samaj. Pandit Sastri intended to add a third volume containing sketches of life and work of Brahmo leaders for which he had collected some materials, but this he could not finish.

In 1912 also Pandit Sastri could take his usual part in the Maghotsav, but the current of life was now ebbing away, and one by one he had to withdraw himself from all active work. Towards the end of the year some brain and eye complaints developed and he was compelled to give up the work of the Sadhanasram, which was very dear to him, and went to Cuttack on 5th November for a change. In the Maghotsav of 1913 he could not take any part, but towards the end of the year he recovered his strength a little and could do some work.

The improvement was maintained and in the Maghotsav of the next year he could again do some work. During the Maghotsav of 1914, he conducted Divine Service on the principal day only and occasionally conducted Service in the Sadhanasram and the Mandir off and on. During the next two years his health was comparatively better and he was able to take a more active part in the Samaj work. On the 10th January 1915, he conducted a Memorial Service in honour of his devoted friend Bhai Prakash Dev, who passed away on the 18th December 1914. In April he went to Darjeeling and stayed there till the beginning of August. During this period he frequently conducted Service in the local Brahmo Samaj and also delivered a public lecture.

During the Maghotsav of 1916, he conducted Divine Service on the principal day and he also conducted Service on the 1st February, the Anniversary of the foundation of the Sadhanasram. Towards the end of the year he could go to

Dacca to preside over the Annual Session of the East Bengal Conference. This was Pandit Sastri's last move out of Calcutta. His presence awakened great enthusiasm among the Brahmos and visitors to Dacca, and the Conference was highly successful, which was mainly due to Pandit Sastri's inspiring presence. Though feeble in health he took a large and active share in the proceedings of the Conference. Besides the Presidential address, which was impressive, he read a thoughtful paper on *Dharmasadhan* on the 4th October and an eloquent address on *the new aspirations and activities of India*. He also conducted the opening and the concluding Service on the 2nd and 6th October. After the Service Pandit Sastri was received by the entire Congregation. Pandit Sastri invoked divine blessings on all and for the work of the Brahmo Samaj in feeling terms. The scene was as touching as it was inspiring.

The exertion and excitement of addressing a large congregation at the evening service had become too much for him, but he often conducted the morning Service in the Mandir at this period. During the Maghotsav of 1917 he could conduct the opening Divine Service as well as the Service on the principal day. During the Easter Holidays of this year, the Brahmos of Calcutta presented an address to Pandit Sastri in recognition of his manifold services to the Brahmo Samaj. The mofussil Samajes heartily co-operated in this pious duty. There was a special Utsav from 6th to 9th April. Brahmo friends from Lahore, Cuttack, Ranchi, Dacca, Mymensingh, Giridhi and other places came to represent their various Samajes and take part in the Utsav. There were Divine Services, lectures and conferences, but the principal function was the presentation of the address to Pandit Sastri, which took place in the extensive grounds of Brahmo Girls' School on the 7th April. A large number of Brahmos from Calcutta and mofussils were present. Sir K. G. Gupta presided over the meeting. The address which was written in Bengali was read by Balu Krishna Kumar Mitra, the President of the S. B. Samaj.

The following is the English rendering of the text of the address of appreciation by the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj presented to Acharya Sivanath Sastri, M. A., by the members of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj on the evening of Saturday, the 7th April :

To

The Revered Minister

Pandit Sivanath Sastri, M. A.

Revered Sir,

To day, we, men and women belonging to the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, approach you with an expression of our heart's love and reverence. You have served this Samaj for nearly forty years with deep love, burning enthusiasm, and whole-hearted devotion. It is impossible to make a due return for all this. This offering we bring to you is only an insignificant token of our heartfelt gratitude.

It was from your youth that the special providence of God manifested itself in your life and clearly marked you out as a chosen servant of His. You embraced Brahmoism in your early years and had to acquire knowledge in the midst of poverty, persecution and struggle. It was in the dawn of your life that your uncommon genius came out brightly, adorning the Bengali language with its productions and attracting your countrymen to true religion, good morals and social reform. You achieved such a high place in the University Examinations, and drew so great a respect from the officers of Government, that, if you were so minded, you might have attained a high position in Government service, acquired vast wealth, enjoyed a good deal of worldly happiness and retired with a Government pension. But the sorrows of our country and the dangers that threatened the Brahmo Samaj frightened and pained you, and at the Divine Call you turned your back to all that and consecrated your life to the service of your country and your Church. With austere self sacrifice and entire reliance on God, you have been keeping this holy vow of service from your youth and have

set before the country a brilliant example of unselfish and elevated life.

It is impossible to express in words the deep thought, the untiring labour and the whole-hearted devotion with which you helped in the establishment of the Sadharan Brahmo-Samaj and have since been serving it. Your eloquent addresses and touching discourses, your fervent prayers, your poems, novels and essays, illumined by the light of genius and full of the sweet perfume of holiness, and your religious books, well-reasoned and filled with high sentiments, are all drawing hundreds of men and women to the pure doctrines and high ideals of the Brahmo Samaj. Your life-long endeavour to promote "depth of thought, largeness of love, firmness of faith, and purity of character" in the Brahmo Samaj has very few parallels. Your loving activity is visible in every kind of work for the welfare of the Samaj. In the rules and constitution of our Samaj, in our educational institutions, in our periodicals, in our institutions for spiritual culture and religious teaching, in our mission work and missionary organisations, in our endeavours after helping the poor, and in all other philanthropic efforts, the influence of your love and enthusiasm is most conspicuous. Indifferent to broken health and the infirmities of old age, you are absorbed day and night in thinking of our welfare and are serving your church with restless energy.

Thinking of your spotless character, your love of God and your devoted service to the Church, we bow down to you again and again, and pray to God to keep you in our midst for a long time yet, to spread and perpetuate in the Church and the country the holy influence of your life, and to grant your life-long prayer for this Samaj and this country.

Yours most obediently,
The Members of the
Sadharan Brahmo Samaj.

Several speakers including Babu Viswanath Kar representing the Utkal Brahmo Samaj, Babu Manomohan Chakravarty, missionary of the Barisal Brahmo Samaj, Pandit Nirmal Chandra from the Punjab, two ladies, and Babu Jadunath Chakravarty and Sreenath Dutta, two old friends of Pandit Sastri, spoke in feeling terms in recognition of the services of the revered minister. The President spoke on the life and mission of Pandit Sastri, who, as one of the bright scholars of his time, had great prospects which he sacrificed at the alter of the new religion of which he was one of the greatest apostles. In reply Pandit Sastri spoke a few touching and impressive words in which he expressed how deeply he had been moved by the kindness and gratitude shown to him. He assured the audience of his fervent faith in and reliance upon divine guidance which has never failed to show him the way he followed and concluded by regretting that he could not do as much as he wished ; but with God's help he always aimed at doing his duty. His words of sincere love and his reliance on God made a deep impression on the audience. The entire proceedings were marked by great enthusiasm. This function practically proved to be his last leave taking from the Brahmo public. For though he lived more than two years after this he could not appear before any large gathering. He could not take any part in the Maghotsav of 1918. His strength was slowly but steadily ebbing away ; but still occasionally conducted divine service in small gatherings. In November 1918 he had a serious attack of influenza and his condition became so serious that his life was almost despaired of. Though the crisis passed off, he never regained his strength. In May 1919, he had a severe attack of dysentery which lasted for about a month and a half. Henceforth he was confined to bed and after lingering for a few months more, he quietly passed away on the 30th September 1919.

Such is the brief record of the life of Pandit Sastri, the life spent in most strenuous activities. Important, and volu-

minous as was the work of Pandit Sastri, the man was greater than all his works. Absolutely sincere and transparent, he always sought truth and endeavoured to do the right. The guiding principle of life may be summed up in one line of a poem of his:

"Whoever will come, let him come, Whoever will stay, let him stay ; I go forward listening to Thy call."

His life was full of struggles and trials, but he never faltered to march forward at the call of duty. He had to pass through a thorny path in life. But he was a man of faith in the providence of God. Throughout his eventful career he was guided and upheld by an implicit trust in an over-ruling providence. He had an absolute trust in the "divinity that shapes our end rough how them as we will". Hence he never despaired in the victory of truth and righteousness. He believed in a God of love. His faith was based in the love of God. The message of his life was love. The one thing that pervaded all his teaching was love—love of God and love of man. His whole life testified to the creed of the apostle of the Gentiles, now there abided faith, hope and love, but the greatest of them all is love. The most prominent feature in the life of Pandit Sivanath Sastri was love. From childhood his entire career was marked by an abounding love. The affection which he poured so freely to his little sister in his childhood flowed in diverse directions as he grew in years till it culminated in a steady love of God, the Bhakti of later years, which sweetened his whole life. A loving son, a faithful friend, a dutiful husband, an affectionate father, a considerate comrade, and above all a devout worshipper, Pandit Sastri was an ideal of the new age. His life was a living embodiment of the ideal of manhood that he preached throughout his long period, namely, depth in knowledge, breadth in love, keenness of conscience, strength of will and crowning all, love of God. Verily Sivanath Sastri was a unique man the like of whom we shall not see again.

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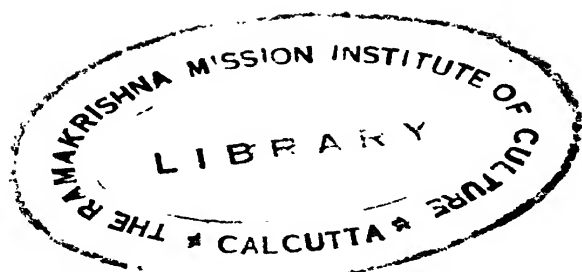
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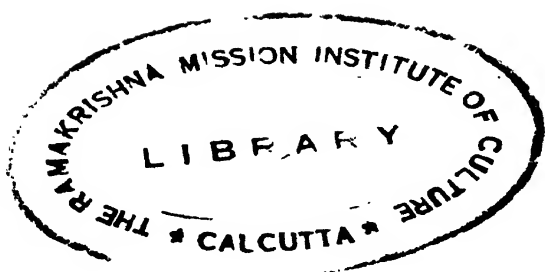
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